United Nations S/PV.7809

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2016

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 7809th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 15 November 2016, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 15 November 2016, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 7809th meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

"The President invited Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Mr. Ladsous.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Ladsous and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views."

16-20207 (E) 161116

Please recycle

United Nations S/PV.7810

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7810th meeting
Tuesday, 15 November 2016, 4.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Seck	(Senegal)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mr. Abdul Razak
	New Zealand	Mr. Kennedy
	Russian Federation	Mr. Letoshnev
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	Ukraine	Mr. Ilnytskyi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. González
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2016/864)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-38524 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2016/864)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of South Sudan and the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/960, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/864, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2318 (2016).

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like, at the outset, to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on presiding over the Security Council this month. I wish your friendly country and you personally every success.

I should also like to extend to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, our congratulations on his wise leadership of the Council last month.

I thank the Secretary-General for the report before the Council in document S/2016/864.

As we extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for a further six months, I am pleased to note the positive roles played by the Force since it was established, in addition to the efforts deployed by the community and the Government, which have started to bear fruit as reflected in the onset of a stable security situation in Abyei and the remarkable progress made in asserting the notion of peaceful coexistence between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report.

I would like to reaffirm to the Security Council that the Government of the Republic of the Sudan will cooperate fully and comprehensively with UNISFA so that it can implement its mandate. That has been the consistent approach of the Sudanese Government towards UNISFA since its establishment, and will contribute to achieving security and stability in Abyei. It is also of the utmost importance that UNISFA be committed to the limits of its mandate, as identified in resolution 1990 (2011), which established the Force and provides an environment conducive to achieving the desired outcome.

The Government of the Sudan reaffirms its commitment to all the agreements signed with South Sudan, starting with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that led to the founding of the Republic of South Sudan in 2011; the 2005 Abyei Protocol and the Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, of 20 June 2011; and the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan of 27 September 2012. I call on my brothers and sisters in the Government of South Sudan to engage in a positive manner with the Sudanese Government and the African Union in order to quickly establish insitutions in Abyei, as stipulated by the Agreement of 20 June 2011, with a view to determining the final status of Abyei, which remains the exclusive right of the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan in accordance with the signed agreements.

We would like to stress that the Abyei region is Sudanese territory, and the Republic of the Sudan

has full sovereignty over it in accordance with the provisions of international law, the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague and the 2005 Abyei Protocol to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. That status can be amended only through the Abyei referendum agreed on by the Governments of the two countries or through any other measure agreed to bilaterally by the two parties.

My delegation would like to reaffirm that the path to sustainable peace and stability in the Abyei region and along the borders between the two countries is based on two main pillars, namely, the implementation of the interim administrative and security arrangements for Abyei and the implementation of all agreements under the Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. The first agreement includes provisions on the establishment of the Abyei joint administration, its joint legislative council and its joint police. Those institutions are indispensable to managing the Area and providing the necessary services to its citizens, as well as establishing the appropriate conditions for resolving the issue of the final status of Abyei in a way that meets the expectations of all stakeholders, with a win-win formula that satisfies everyone.

The Cooperation Agreement laid a solid foundation for normalizing relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, enhancing cooperation in all areas between the two and achieving sustained peace. It covered the areas of oil resources, trade, borders, security arrangements, the status of citizens and other themes. However, our brothers in South Sudan have so far been enthusiastic only about the implementation of the oil agreement. They have overlooked the implementation of other agreements, particularly the Agreement on Security Arrangements between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, which includes provisions on ending the support for, and the harbouring of, rebel movements, the establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the establishment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM).

In that regard, my delegation hopes that the Government of the Republic of Sudan will honour its obligations to implement all of the provisions of the Agreement on Security Arrangements so as to encourage cooperation between our countries. That would create an enabling environment for deciding on the final status of Abyei. In that connection, we commend the recent calls on our brothers in South Sudan by international partners for South Sudan to practically, fully and clearly end its support for the armed groups that are active in South Sudan, which they use as a springboard for sabotage operations in the Sudan. We also commend the recent announcements to that effect by the Government of South Sudan and we hope that those words will be followed by actions.

On the deployment of the oil police in the Diffra oil complex, my delegation reaffirms the need for such a step, as the joint Abyei police has not yet been established. Another reason is that there are Sudanese rebel movement groups in South Sudan that can target those vital installations. That force is limited both in number and equipment.

My delegation agrees with the statement in the Secretary-General's report concerning the importance of the resumption of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC). We call for the holding of regular AJOC meetings. In that regard, we also call upon the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, the African Union (AU) High-level Implementation Panel and other partners to redouble their efforts to encourage the Government of South Sudan to hold such meetings and to enable the JBVMM to work smoothly to remove all obstacles in its path.

The Secretary-General's report refers to the fact that many citizens of South Sudan have gone to my country through territories of South Sudan, in particular to the states of East Darfur, South Darfur and West Kordofan. That serves to underscore the special relationship between the peoples of the Sudan and South Sudan — a unique and valued relationship that we will continue to foster. We will also continue to work towards stability in the states of Darfur. That all goes to show that my country has been right in its calls for beginning the implementation of a phased and smooth exit strategy for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

In conclusion, I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all of our partners who make efforts to facilitate the work of United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, in particular the Government of Ethiopia, the African Union Peace and Security Council, the AU Commission, the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on the Sudan and South Sudan and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan. We also commend the commitment of the Secretary-General and the positive

elements in his report. We call for concerted efforts to continue along the positive path that will enable us to tackle the pending issues and make sure that the process is in no way hindered.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malok (South Sudan): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I would like to assure you of our full cooperation for the success of your presidency. I would also like to acknowledge the positive role played by your predecessor in leading the Council last month.

The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) is the best thing to happen to Abyei in its long history of struggle, neglect and suffering from insecurity. Although a great deal remains to be done, notable progress has been made towards promoting peace and security in Abyei, fostering reconciliation and cooperation among the communities that converge seasonally in the Area, delivering social services and humanitarian assistance and initiating socioeconomic development programmes. That would not have been possible without the creative and determined efforts of UNISFA.

Cooperation between the two countries is crucial to any constructive and productive efforts in Abyei. Indeed, even the progress made by UNISFA could not have been possible without a degree of functional cooperation by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan. However, much more cooperation is needed if the efforts of UNISFA are to continue to bear tangible fruits that will benefit the two communities and help to facilitate continued improvement in the relations between the two countries.

We are encouraged by the recent improvement in relations between the two countries. The Government of South Sudan sincerely hopes that this will develop into an even greater cooperation in the wide range of areas of mutual concern and interest. In that connection, it is our firm belief that the Abyei Area can contribute significantly to the development of cordial ties between the two countries. That can be done by building on grass-roots intercommunal cooperation, which can extend to the national level in the two countries.

As things stand now, it is obvious that the search for a final solution to the Abyei problem has stalled due to the differences between the two Governments, despite the tireless efforts of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, under the leadership of the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and the support of the African Union and the United Nations. The people of Abyei and the neighbouring communities, from both the north and the south, who migrate into the Area seasonally in search of water and pastures cannot be abandoned to suffer neglect in a vacuum of State responsibility for their security and general welfare. The international community is called upon to step in and fill the vacuum, not only in the immediate interests of the communities concerned but also in the long-term interests of the two countries. That is urgently needed to stabilize the situation in the Area and to create an environment conducive to a more constructive and fruitful dialogue on the future of Abyei.

The report (S/2016/864) of the Secretary-General indicates that significant progress has been made in a number of critical areas, although the security situation in Abyei remains precarious. UNISFA has continued to conduct operations in promoting peace and stability. While the establishment of the Abyei Police Service continues to be elusive, the UNISFA police component continues to support the maintenance of law and order through community-based interactive patrols. In that connection, the UNISFA police component has been cooperating with leaders from both communities to promote safer neighbourhoods and to protect civilians. UNISFA has also continued to encourage and support both communities to promote dialogue and reconciliation.

In partnership with community leaders on both sides, UNISFA has provided security and encouraged joint peace committees to establish and manage the common market for their communities. Indeed, as the Secretary-General notes, Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya leaders have made encouraging progress in addressing issues affecting their people, including promoting reconciliation between their communities.

The progress made in various areas was presented to the South Sudanese members of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) when they visited the Area in March 2015. The areas covered by the briefing included the security and political situation, the resettlement patterns in northern Abyei, the status of returnees, the development of the common market, quick-impact development projects and other development activities

being carried out by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. During the same week, the Acting Head of Mission/Force Commander met in Khartoum with the Sudanese members of the AJOC and briefed them on developments in the Area. He was assured of the support of the Sudanese Government for the work being done, especially in promoting the peace process at the local level.

Other areas in which progress has been made include agricultural production; integrated health care, including nutrition, hygiene and sanitation services; educational services, including rehabilitation of the schools and the provision of school materials; protecting women and children against sexual violence and related abuses; and mine-clearance services. Those achievements have helped to reverse migration out of the Area, encouraged resettlement and reintegration, minimized disruptive activities that threaten peace and supported the sustainability of local peace initiatives in the Area.

Despite the progress made by UNISFA in various areas, much more needs to be done to promote and consolidate peace, security, stability and the prospects for socioeconomic development in the Area. That must first and foremost be the responsibility of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan. Despite its very limited resources and the severe challenges posed by the current crises in the country, the Government of South Sudan continues to do what it can to assist the people of Abyei. The Government of the Sudan is called upon to respond more positively to the needs of the Area, which is both within its power and in its interests.

It is noteworthy that, as the report of the Secretary-General observes, the restrictions imposed by the Government of the Sudan on non-governmental organizations have limited the implementation capacity of humanitarian and development actors, especially in the northern parts of Abyei. As the Secretary-General also notes, in addition to a lack of adequate funds, other challenges include high implementation costs owing to security and logistical constraints, delays in the issuance of travel permits and restrictions on the movement of personnel and supplies by the Government of the Sudan.

In conclusion, an issue that has continued to be a source of deep grievance and anger among the Ngok Dinka is the unresolved responsibility for the killing of their Paramount Chief, who was assassinated, together with a UNISFA peacekeeper, by a member of the Misseriya in May 2013. Although an investigation committee was established to conduct an investigation into the killing, its report has never been made public. It is therefore crucial to the process of healing and reconciliation between the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya that the findings and recommendations of the investigation committee be made public in order to enable the communities to find closure on the matter and conduct the customary process of reconciliation.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7811

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7811th meeting
Wednesday, 16 November 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Seck	(Senegal)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Coleman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2016/901)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-38657 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2016/901)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Tanin is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Pristina.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Vlora Çitaku to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/901, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tanin.

Mr. Tanin: During the three months since my last presentation to the Security Council (see S/PV.7760), there has been some consolidation of the political situation in Kosovo. Regionally, some new, positive developments, together with some new reasons for concern, have emerged. Some of these are well covered in the Secretary-General's report before the Council (S/2016/901); others have emerged since the submission of the report and deserve to be highlighted.

I take note that, besides this being the last briefing on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) of 2016, it is also the last UNMIK report by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has personally dedicated considerable time and attention to this issue during the past decade.

Many of the political expectations with which Kosovo the year yielded fewer results than hoped. Difficulty building a broad political consensus has meant that the territorial delineation agreement with Montenegro, agreed in 2015, remains unratified, with attendant consequences for Europe's visa liberalization plans for Kosovo. Political divisions have also made it more difficult to reap the benefits of normalizing relations with Serbia within the dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU). Kosovo's EU Stabilization and Association Process, a major development with far-reaching potential, has been given little focused attention by officials or the public, despite holding the promise of much wider opportunities than the visa liberalization matter can offer by itself.

The political violence of earlier months has subsided. However, the divergent positions of the ruling and opposition parties are just as entrenched, and the general political atmosphere remains deeply polarized. For Kosovo, this is unfortunate at a time when relations among traditional regional rivals — for example Tirana, and Belgrade — have benefitted from renewed dialogue and the strengthening of economic ties.

Despite the political polarization, some of Kosovo's leaders are forging ahead with a farther-sighted view of reconciliation and the rebuilding of mutually beneficial relations. I would like to highlight President Thaçi's recent engagement jointly with the family associations of both Albanian and Serb missing persons, and his emphasis on treating this issue on humanitarian, not political grounds. He has also recently met with a mixed Serb and Albanian youth group to encourage understanding of the possibility of a common future that would be better than is the situation today. Such gestures remind us of the potential of genuine dialogue, including but not limited to the EU-facilitated political process.

In contrast, the accelerated passage through parliamentary procedure of a new law on the Trepca industrial complex emerged as another obstacle to constructive dialogue. Irrespective of the details of the law itself, the manner of its adoption was certain

to produce the negative reactions that we witnessed. Assembly members were given less than 48 hours to review the draft, with almost no opportunity for analysis and argument. Both the law and the procedure generated strong protest among the Serb community, as well as from Belgrade, to the extent that Kosovo Serb representatives and officials have suspended their participation in governing institutions. The international member of the Special Chamber of the Kosovo Supreme Court has requested that the Constitutional Court review the constitutionality of the law, based on concern that it appears to contravene fundamental property rights.

The divergence between the preoccupations of governing elites and their electorates is a common pattern. This phenomenon is present in Kosovo as well. The priorities identified as being most important by voters at the community level are often strikingly distant from the issues dominating the elected bodies and popular media spaces. The results of recent surveys, including one commissioned by UNMIK, indicate that there is little ethnic division in priorities at the community level: unemployment, corruption and lack of economic development are the biggest concerns.

Among other recent notable findings are the facts that the level of trust in governing institutions is low; the level of trust in international institutions is also low; a range of party political allegiances appear to be shifting; all ethnic groups place more emphasis on dialogue among community leaders as the method for advancing reconciliation than on political level dialogue; and the normalization of relations with Serbia is considered to be an important priority in roughly equal proportion in both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities — over 50 per cent in both cases. Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians alike, in substantial majority, believe that the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities will increase the security of Kosovo Serbs.

In their annual reports, the EU and the World Bank continue to highlight low levels of employment generation, and the exceptionally high rate of youth unemployment, as fundamental issues to be tackled in Kosovo. Young people unable to find opportunities within accepted parameters are vulnerable to the temptations of alternative narratives, including extremism.

Regardless of these familiar dichotomies between political issues and ground-level concerns, the European perspective remains a force for stabilization throughout the Balkan region. The dialogue process delivered progress during this period, including on the freedom of movement, and in recent days a breakthrough was announced on the telecommunications issue. In contrast, there have been few visible signs of progress on the implementation of the community/association of Serb-majority municipalities.

Ultimately, political and societal reconciliation processes must reinforce each other. I hope that political dialogue is what awaits Kosovo in 2017, accompanied by the necessary progress at the community level. In those efforts, the roles of the EU and the United Nations continue to converge.

I take this opportunity to praise some of the excellent efforts towards reconciliation at the municipal level, where municipal authorities have listened and responded to the concerns of their communities, resulting in real progress. In Ferizaj/Uroševac, the Mayor appointed a Deputy Mayor for communities, despite being under no obligation to do so. The municipal authorities responded to a request for assistance to clean and secure a Serbian Orthodox cemetery, and undertook to provide ongoing support to maintain the cemetery. In Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, the municipal authority approved the allocation of funds to clean three Serbian Orthodox cemeteries. In North Mitrovica, the long-standing barricade on Prince Milos Street was quietly and voluntarily removed on the evening of 28 October.

Unfortunately, exceptions do exist. The declaration by the Suhareka/Suva Reka Municipal Assembly in late October, opposing the return of Kosovo Serb, is regressive and regrettable. The absence of a response by the Kosovo governing institutions is disappointing. The pain caused by the unresolved cases of missing persons is real and understandable, but the right to a safe and dignified return is also fundamental. An opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation has been missed.

I wish to highlight the progress in efforts to advance the rule of law in Kosovo. Commitment to the impartial application of the rule of law should be recognized and supported. There is deserved recognition for the determination to pursue cases of high-profile corruption, including the investigations into organized criminal activities a few members of Kosovo's political class. A clear distinction should be made between individual and institutional responsibility. While the

Assembly of Kosovo moved to adopt a resolution on the values of the Kosovo Liberation Army, it is individuals who have been convicted of crimes, and not groups or organizations.

One week ago, I had an opportunity to meet with David Schwendiman, the newly appointed Specialist Prosecutor of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers. He informed me that preparations for the full functionality of the Specialist Chambers were well advanced. The integrity of the judicial process requires that all parties refrain from seeking to exert improper influence or sway public opinion, including through unfounded speculation about the specific content of the judicial process. The death in custody of Vetëvendosje party activist Astrit Dehari has raised concerns and provoked indignation in many quarters. In the light of the many questions that have been raised, an objective, thorough and transparent investigation into that incident is essential.

Violent extremism and terrorism are evolving threats in Kosovo and the region. Countering those threats requires a holistic approach in which law enforcement is one essential component. Last week, the authorities in Kosovo arrested a number of individuals who had allegedly been recruited by extremist militants in Syria to plan and conduct attacks in Kosovo and the region. Kosovo's security bodies deserve special commendation for their vigilance.

As I have reported to the Security Council, UNMIK is steadily adapting itself so as to more effectively address the contemporary challenges in Kosovo. A logical optimization of our existing resources is helping to ensure that the Mission discharges its mandate in a focused and constructive manner, together with all of its partners. Of crucial importance is the Mission's relationship with the Kosovo institutions, and I am pleased to confirm that the improvement in relations reported in the Secretary-General's most recent report on Kosovo is continuing. Among the many benefits for all parties, that improved communication helps the Mission to ensure accurate and balanced reporting on the situation in Kosovo.

As highlighted by members of the Council in past meetings, we can all help to advance the cause of reconciliation. Empirical data from knowledge products such as the surveys I mentioned help to update our understanding of the real concerns among the different geographic and ethnic communities. What did not work yesterday might work today. That concept, and constructive innovation in general, should guide our endeavours.

To play our part in supporting a better future for all people in Kosovo, the Mission continues to rely upon the support of the Council. I thank the Council sincerely for that support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Tanin for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*): I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for introducing the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/901) and for his overall engagement in the achievement of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). I also salute all Members of the Security Council and and take this opportunity to inform the Council of the importance of the continued consideration by this organ — every three months — of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija, with the aim of creating conditions for the unhindered implementation of the UNMIK mandate and as a way of supporting the dialogue process between Belgrade and Pristina that is being faciliated by the European Union (EU). I also take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his contribution to the work of the Organization during his tenure, as well as to wish success to his successor, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

Notwithstanding numerous challenges, the Republic of Serbia has demonstrated time and again its clear commitment to solving the outstanding issues through dialogue, within a status-neutral framework that is guided primarily by the interests of regional stability and the creation of conditions for economic prosperity and the progress of the region in the process of EU accession negotiations.

The agreement on telecommunications was recently reached due to the efforts of the Republic of Serbia, whereby a contribution was made to the implementation of the Brussels Agreement. Yet our readiness to seek sustainable solutions through negotiations conducive to a better life for the people of Kosovo and Metohija has frequently not been reciprocated with the same approach

from the other side, which regrettably continues to resort to unilateral and evidently very detrimental moves, such as the recent unheard-of attempt by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) in Pristina to confiscate the Mining, Metallurgy and Chemical Combine at Trepca.

Let me point out that, ever since the inception of the dialogue, Serbia has insisted, during almost every round and at every level, that the question of property be included in the agenda, and yet Pristina has always refused to talk about the matter. Such actions by Pristina, which instil an atmosphere of unilateral imposition, fait accompli and ultimatum instead of solving outstanding issues through dialogue with the aim of finding acceptable solutions for all involved parties, as has been done in the past, are not in the interests of regional peace and stability at all.

As the Council may well know, in 1999 UNMIK undertook to oversee the Mining, Metallurgy and Chemical Combine at Trepca under resolution 1244 (1999). UNMIK transferred the combine management rights to the Kosovo Trust Agency, established by UNMIK itself in 2002. Following the illegal, unilateral declaration of independence by Pristina in 2008, the Privatization Agency of Kosovo was established, which took over the competencies of the Kosovo Trust Agency, which has not been approved by UNMIK to this day. The illegal Privatization Agency of Kosovo then proceeded to privatize State- and community-owned property in the province, to the extent that, through the persistent pursuit of abusive practices for which no legal basis exists in resolution 1244 (1999), Pristina unilaterally privatized about 70 per cent of State- and community-owned property in the province. At the same time as the unlawful privatization, Pristina went on to seize the private property of Serbs and of the Serbian Orthodox Church. That widespread ill practice was carried out, by and large, by way of the submission of fraudulent documents issued by Kosovo institutions to local Albanians.

The adoption of the law on Trepca was done in gross violation of the basic principles of resolution 1244 (1999) and the constitutional framework for provisional self-government in Kosovo. The latter, let me recall, specifies explicitly that the authority to administer public-, State- and community-owned property, in accordance with the relevant UNMIK legislation, as well as the regulation of public- and community-owned enterprises, are powers and responsibilities reserved for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. That law, I emphasize, was adopted by the PISG without participation by UNMIK or consultation with the owners/shareholders of Trepca, representatives of the municipalities in the territories on which the Trepca mines and plants are located or representatives of Serbs in the PISG. Let me remind the Council that Serbs are part of the Government of Kosovo and the Trepca North management and employees. Those unilateral actions by the PISG induce legal insecurity that may seriously threaten the fragile security situation in Kosovo and Metohija. Particularly disconcerting is the fact that the law disrupts lastingly sustainable economic development, without which the ethnic structure in the Serbian communities in the north of the province is untenable.

By those actions the PISG in Kosovo and Metohija have patently crossed the bounds of their mandate and confiscated the private property of Trepca, thus affecting the owners/shareholders, creditors and the employees in a direct way. They did so contrary to the principles of international law against such types of confiscation, as well as a number of international instruments guaranteeing the right to the peaceful enjoyment of property, prohibiting discrimination and promoting equality before the law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Charter of Local Self-Government and so forth. Also, the law runs roughshod over the basic principles of the free market and competition and is in direct contravention of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Pristina and the European Union and of the Central European Free Trade Agreement.

Pristina is in the process of transforming, without any legal basis or justification, the largest economic giant in Kosovo and Metohija into the property of the so-called Republic of Kosovo, while denying Serbia any rights whatsoever, even though it is the majority shareholder in the corporation. That is a serious attack on the interests of the Serbs, including 3,000 of them working in Trepca. It is estimated that about 38 per cent of Serbian families directly or indirectly depend on it. Property and the right to property are sacrosanct, particularly in the democratic world, and who owns Trepca is only too apparent. The companies and citizens

of Serbia who built it own it, and no unlawful decision of the Kosovo authorities can change that.

Proceeding therefrom, the Government of the Republic of Serbia decided to make all legal consequences of the acts and actions of the PISG in Pristina relative to the legal and physical status of Trepca null and void. Desirous of ensuring that Trepca, which is of vital importance for the survival of the Serbs in the province and for the economic development primarily of the municipalities of Kosovska Mitrovica, Zvečan, Leposavić and Zubin Potok, as well as of Novo Brdo and Gračanica, the Government took action and made a decision. The attack on Trepca is not only an attack on one company, it is also an attack on the right of a people to exist in a territory and an attack on the very provisions of resolution 1244 (1999), on which peace and stability in the province rest.

Trepca is the lifeblood of the Serbs' existence in northern Kosovo and Metohija. Serbian homes sit on Trepca's land, and thousands of Serbs work in Trepca's mines and support their families by that work. For them the defence of Trepca is the defence of their right to exist in Kosovo. In that sense, the attempt to seize it from its lawful owners is also an attempt to finalize the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs and to bring into question the ethnic composition of Serbian communities in the long term. This is not acceptable.

Not only do the authorities in Pristina usurp the property of the State of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija through the law on Trepca; in article 5 the law states that the so-called Republic of Kosovo will also appropriate mineral resources in other parts of Serbia, outside of Kosovo and Metohija, which is complete legal nonsense.

Serbia remains open to seeking a peaceful and sustainable solution to this situation, which is not of its own making, in the belief that resolving all questions and problems through dialogue and agreement is the only right way forward. In that context, we expect Security Council members to bring the force of their authority to bear and have the law annulled, thereby preventing its negative legal and security consequences from jeopardizing the stability of Kosovo and Metohija and the region, as well as enabling the process of dialogue and the normalization of relations. Otherwise, Kosovo and Metohija will become a black hole in Europe without any protection of private property.

I would like to point out, as I did at previous meetings of the Council, that the establishment, within the shortest period of time, of the Community of Serb-majority municipalities, as a mechanism for the systematic institutional protection of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija, is of paramount importance for the survival of the Serbian people in the province. Unfortunately, instead of being the central issue and acted upon as a matter of priority, the establishment of the Community has become the subject of political blackmail. Our side insisted in the past period that the dynamics of the establishment of the Community be worked out and that the date for the management team to commence its work be determined. The Community of Serb-majority municipalities is to be based only on agreements already reached in the dialogue, and not on subsequent attempts to unilaterally alter the agreements reached with the facilitation of the European Union.

The process of establishing the Community of Serb-majority municipalities must not be allowed to drag on and be threatened by unilateral acts that send messages of disenfranchisement to the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija. One such message is the law on strategic investment in Kosovo, which, if implemented, would provide Pristina with cover to contract capital projects directly, without tender offers; for the participation of the institutions of local self-government; and to possess and sell general assets arbitrarily to the detriment of the status and interests of the Serbian people in the province. That law was adopted contrary to the procedure that provides for the adoption of laws of vital interest to local communities, eviscerating the Community of Serb-majority municipalities by infringing on the competencies that under the agreement belong quite explicitly to that Community to be.

It is clear that this legislative provocation by Pristina is aimed at making the Community of Serb-majority municipalities an empty shell and preventing Serbs from making decisions with regard to their economic development and urban planning. The theft of Serbian property in Kosovo and Metohija, such as the failed attempt to seize the tourist complex on Mount Brezovica, cannot be legalized by any law. It is therefore necessary to return to the negotiating table, as the unilateral acts do not benefit anybody.

The situation in Kosovo and Metohija continues to be characterized by the absence of physical and legal security for Serbs, especially for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have returned or would like to return home. IDPs are prevented from participating in

developing the law on the Kosovo property comparison and verification agency, which is yet another inadmissible and frightening example of the attempt to seize Serbian property in outright contravention of the agreement on cadastre reached within the dialogue conducted with the facilitation of the European Union. All along, thousands of Albanians are being inscribed in the cadastre as owners of the property of IDPs by way of submission of fraudulent documents, while no special mechanism has been provided to notify IDPs of the proceedings instituted in connection with their property.

Another method of discouragement of returns, especially in the region of Peć, is the dissemination of information in the Kosovo media of the issuance of indictments for war crimes against a large number of Serbs, almost as a rule against IDPs reporting for return. IDPs are repeatedly being attacked, with the frequent use of firearms and explosive devices, while acts of desecration against Orthodox graveyards and memorial plaques of abducted or murdered civilians are on the rise. Attempts to prevent IDPs from observing religious holidays, as was the case in Djakovica and Mušutište, continue unabated. In addition, religious extremism, compounded by terrorism and the activities of radicalized extremists returning from battlefields and terrorist group formations, has dramatically increased in Kosovo and Metohija. That exacerbates the polarized political environment, which is replete with tensions and tear gas democracy and persistent violence against the members of Serbian and other non-Albanian communities.

Security in Kosovo and Metohija has always been in short supply and marked with escalating violence. As a rule, returnees to ethnically mixed communities are the most vulnerable. It is therefore hard to understand why there is reduced focus and space on security observations in the report of the Secretary-General. It is for that reason that we propose that new chapters on the situation in the communities south of the Ibar River, on obstacles aggravating or preventing IDP returns, on property rights and impunity for ethnically motivated crimes be included in the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General.

Let me also point out that the monotonous recitation of incomplete statistics on attacks or the life and property of members of non-Albanian communities serves but to cast a pall of relativity over the civilizationally inadmissible phenomenon of persecution on an ethnic and religious basis. The report would be much more informative if, in addition to statistics, it advised of how competent institutions — including police, public prosecutors and the judiciary — reacted, and if it provided data relative to investigations, the search for perpetrators, indictments, criminal or civil trials and the types of sentences handed down, along with the terms of their validity and enforcement in cases of ethnically motivated criminal offences. Without institutional reaction, all attacks and other offences against Serbs are being depersonalized and reduced to statistics, which leads to the tolerance of a climate of impunity of ethnically motivated crimes against Serbs in the long run. Providing data on the outcome percentages related to such criminal offences would therefore be very informative indeed.

Instances of desecration against the spiritual heritage of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija are many. The last such instance was the arson that took place in the Church of Christ the Saviour in Pristina at the beginning of September, of which I also made mention in my previous statement to the Council (see S/PV.7760). Let me remind the Council that that is an unfinished church that was converted into a public lavatory and a podium to shoot music videos featuring scantily clad singers. As if that were not enough, unknown persons broke into the church and set it afire. That contemptible act is an outright consequence of the refusal of the Kosovo authorities and police to provide round-the-clock protection to the church, which has been frequently broken into and desecrated. That incident was preceded by protests by Kosovo and Metohija Albanians who time and again manifested unchecked hostility towards the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people in the province, the targets of systematic ethnic terror for the past 17 years.

The church, the only remaining trace and symbol of the presence of Orthodox Christianity in downtown Pristina, in which more than 40,000 Serbs lived before 1999, has been designated for destruction, just as every other Serbian thing destroyed or expelled from Pristina and many other places in Kosovo and Metohija. For weeks, the Pristina authorities bulldozed each and every square foot of the land surrounding the church, in an attempt to link it in whichever way with war crimes; once they failed, the arson ensued. The extremists calling for the destruction of the church or its seizure from the Serbian Orthodox Church and conversion are in fact calling for the continuation of

ethnic cleansing and the denial of basic religious rights and freedoms to the Serbian people, thus violating the civilizational norms of the present-day world. They fan the flames of ethnic and religious extremism and radicalism and hamper stabilization and reconciliation. Furthermore, reflecting Pristina's true attitude towards the cultural and religious heritage of the Serbs, they are at the same time indicative of how right Serbia was to oppose Kosovo's admission to UNESCO. Those who destroy, set ablaze or desecrate Serbian churches cannot be their keepers. Perhaps those who supported the admission have now come to realize to whom they wanted to entrust the protection of the Serbian heritage in the province.

Because basic conditions for sustainable returns do not exist, the number of returnees to the province continues to be lamentably low. I submit that that is a defeat for all those involved in the process of return. It is incumbent upon all of us to change that situation and to create conditions in which IDPs are given a real choice, in deeds and not only in words, between return and local integration. To do so, though, we must see to it that basci conditions be fulfilled in places of return with regard to personal and property security. The rule of law, non-discrimination, full respect for basic human and civil rights and a step away from politics, which deepens the gap among communities on a national and religious basis, are the necessary preconditions for normalizing relations and finding solutions to questions relative to IDPs from Kosovo and Metohija. It is important to keep such people in the focus of the international community, and of the United Nations in particular, despite the numerous problems the world faces, including the current refugee and migrant crisis, all the more so as this is exactly a question that explicitly falls under the UNMIK mandate. The international community must not allow those people to be forgotten. It is not enough to note that the level of returns is unacceptably low; the reasons for the failure should be analysed instead. The failure is attributable primarily to the rigid attitude of the majority community, as well as of its political leaders, towards the return of displaced Serbs.

Let me remind the Council — and, when speaking about Kosovo and Metohija, the Secretary-General should also recall in his reports and remind each of the members of the Council — that truly sustainable returns have been realized only by 1.9 per cent of internally displaced persons. Does the Security Council believe that that is a topic that should no longer be discussed? If not, the Council would call on Pristina to create the necessary conditions and appeal to people to return to Kosovo. We cannot allow that to be forgotten. I hope that none of the countries represented in the Council will operate with double standards now that it pertains to Serbians who are displaced. That is why I recall, once again, that the Security Council adopted a resolution giving a mandate to the Mission to enable the return of internally displaced and persecuted persons from Kosovo, whether Serbs or Albanians. Only 1.9 per cent of Serbs have returned. That percentage accounts for approximately 4,000 internally displaced persons. One of the reasons for that is the disregard for communities south of the Ibar River, which increases their feeling of being isolated, sidelined and left to their own devices.

Each and every time the representatives of Pristina utter their accusations of alleged genocide and ethnic cleansing of Albanians, please remember my remarks from our previous meeting that, out of 427 localities in which they lived until 1999, Serbs were expelled from 311. Today no Serbs are present there. More than 220,000 were expelled.

Let us remember the victims of the monstrous crime of trafficking in human organs, testified to by Mr. Dick Marty, Special Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in his report. Let us remember the abducted and disappeared Serbs and other non-Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija, the fate of whom is unknown 17 years after the conflict. More than 1,000 Serbs have been killed since 1999. The number of their killers against whom legally valid sentences were handed down still amounts to zero.

Let us remember Father Chariton, the martyr bestially killed in my native Prizren in June 1999. He was decapitated in the same way in which, to the consternation of the entire world, the terrorists of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant behead their innocent victims today. His headless body was found with his arms and backbone broken and with stabs in his heart, gruesome evidence of the torture of Albanian extremists to which he succumbed.

Let us remember the March pogrom of 2004, in which 19 Serbs were killed and 900 wounded, despite the international presence in the province. Nine hundred and thirty-five Serbian, Roma and Ashkali houses were set afire. Six towns and 10 villages were ethnically cleansed. About 4,000 men and women were expelled

from their homes. Thirty-five churches were destroyed, burned or desecrated, many of which were built as early as the fourteenth century. The abbey of Devič, which was founded by the Serbian Despot Durad Branković in 1434, was also burned that March, while those who set fire to Mother of God Ljeviška Chuch, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, burned automobile tires so that fire quickly incinerated some of the most beautiful icons from the first half of the fourteenth century, which represents some of the cultural heritage of the world.

Let us remember the numerous instances of vandalism on Serbian cultural and religious heritage throughout the province, unbecoming of modern-day Europe and the civilized world. Since June 1999 and the cessation of the armed conflict, 236 churches, monasteries and other facilities owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as historic-cultural monuments, have been targets of attack. One hundred and seventy-four religious sites and 33 historic-cultural monuments have been destroyed. There are no undamaged tombstones in most Serbian cemeteries, while south the Ibar River no monuments from Serbian history remain intact. No localities south of the Ibar River have streets today with Serbian names, as most of them have been renamed to bear the names of the members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, who are proven terrorists and perpetrators of monstrous crimes. The message sent to the Serbs is very clear indeed: those who killed and expelled them now pass as national heroes, and monuments are erected and streets and public institutions are renamed to glorify their names. Those instances of institutional violence in present-day Kosovo and Metohija are part of the strategy aimed at erasing the traces of the centuries-long presence of the Serbian people and State and legitimizing the results of the ethnic cleansing of the Serbian people.

The representatives of Pristina continue to repeat their false accusations, which are based on the premise that a lie told 1,000 times becomes a truth. Let us remember all that I have said. Those lies cannot change the fact that Kosovo is not and cannot be a State. Kosovo is nothing but the product of a violation of international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the postulates on which modern civilization was built. Ethnic cleansing, mass violations of the human and civil rights of non-Albanians, and the destruction of the cultural heritage that belongs not only to the Serbian people but also makes up a part of Europe's and the world's cultural heritage, all make up the foundation of the self-declared fake State of Kosovo.

The best evidence of the civilizational immaturity of those professing to be the leaders of the Albanian people in Kosovo and Metohija is the recent adoption — and please listen carefully to this — in the Kosovo Parliament of a cynically entitled "Resolution on the protection of the values of the Kosovo Liberation Army". That shameful resolution is predicated on the assumption that crime is of positive social value. If the seizure of property and the torturing and killing of civilians, as well as the ambush of journalists and ambulances, can be called values, then the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army does deserve to have a resolution devoted to it. It is not known that any Parliament in the world, except perhaps during the Second World War, ever adopted a resolution glorifying criminals and terrorists. Yet the Parliament in Pristina has managed to make itself unique once again. Not a modicum of censure of terrorism and violence is to be found in the resolution, which also makes no mention of the "yellow house" in which people had their organs ripped, of the abductions, of the rapes or of the pogroms of Serbian and other non-Albanian civilians, which represent the true values and legacy of the Kosovo Liberation Army. For those reasons I say to the members of the Security Council — who are also representatives of civilized society — that that act by the highest legislative body in Pristina deserves the strongest possible condemnation.

It is exactly in that way that the Parliament in Pristina sent a clear message to the entire international community, including those sitting here in the Chamber, about what the Parliament thinks of the Specialist Chambers — which Mr. Tanin referred to and which other speakers likely will as well — and the crimes of the Kosovo Liberation Army that those Chambers are supposed to verify and punish. That means that the Parliament in Pristina, which adopted the necessary legislation for the commencement of the work of the Specialist Chambers in The Hague, has sent an unequivocal advance notice as to what we can expect going forward in the process of establishing accountability for the crimes committed against the Serbs and other non-Albanians.

That also shows that the visits by Hashim Thaçi to monuments and in connection with the farmers killed in their fields at Staro Gracko in July 1999 and the children killed at Goraždevac in 2003 while they were

playing on the banks of the village stream are nothing but an act of one-shot unsuccessful political marketing.

The assessment from the report before us states that

> "[l]eading by example helps to change attitudes in wider context and gives optimism for the potential for reconciliation to succeed at the social level."(*S/2016/901, para. 22*).

Let me remind the Council that nobody was held accountable for those crimes and that, in all likelihood, nobody ever will be. Only time will tell if those visits will be transformed into a concrete positive step forward in the furtherance of security and respect for the rights of non-Albanian communities. Once the perpetrators are identified and tried, we will certainly commend Mr. Thaçi's visits. For the time being, though, not just those crimes, but no crime to date committed in Kosovo since 1999 has been punished.

In the interest of regional stability, our side will continue the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The dialogue is aimed primarily at addressing the everyday vital problems of the people living in Kosovo and Metohija and at normalizing relations. We will not abuse the dialogue as a platform to ram through the independence of Kosovo. Let me recall that the essence of each and every dialogue, including the one in Brussels, is to achieve agreements, and not impose solutions. The role of the international community is to help achieve compromise, rather than assist one side in imposing its interests. That is true in particular of the Community of Serb-majority municipalities, which is of paramount importance for the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija.

Serbia will never recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, but it will continue the policy of seeking peaceful solutions of this question on the basis of a responsible approach and the full implementation of the agreement reached within the Brussels dialogue. Regardless of the numerous challenges and frequent manifestations of non-constructiveness and the only-too-evident propensity to resorting to half unilateral steps, we will continue to be committed to working towards the normalization of relations. We do not want the situation in Kosovo and Metohija to be a latent threat to the stability and progress of Serbia or the region. We will therefore work with dedication on solving disagreements peacefully, being aware that a long process is in front of us and that, to make things more difficult, we often do not have a proper interlocutor, one who shares our vision of a region aspiring to reconciliation, the rule of law and democratic values.

I call on States that have not recognized the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo to stay loyal — despite the pressure to which many of them have been exposed — to their principles of respect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the supreme authority of the Security Council for safeguarding international peace and security, whose resolution 1244 (2000) confirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia. They should always bear in mind that the support of the international community is key to the success of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. Each and every change of position of the countries that have not recognized the independence of Kosovo would negatively affect the continuation of the constructive approach of the parties in the dialogue and the implementation of the agreements reached.

At the same time, I also call on various countries that have recognized the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo to seriously reassess their decisions and contribute in that way to the efforts aimed at finding a mutually acceptable solution to the question of Kosovo and Metohija. That is what we are asking for — a chance for dialogue and an agreement instead of unilateralism, instead of unilateral acts. We expect Council members to lend their support, while keeping mind the values enshrined by the United Nations, and to repudiate the rampant propaganda and outright lies whereby we keep being told perpetually by the representatives of the PISG in Kosovo at Security Council meetings.

In conclusion, let me point out once again that Serbia continues to be firmly committed to peace, dialogue, reconciliation and regional stability — in a word, to lasting solutions that will lead us to the future instead of to the conflicts of the past.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Ms. Çitaku.

Ms. Çitaku: As always, it is an honour to come to speak before the Security Council on behalf of the Republic of Kosovo.

The countries that Council members represents have put so much effort into bringing about peace and stability in the Western Balkans, and for that we

will be forever grateful. We Kosovars are living proof that, when there is solidarity among the free nations of the world, when there is courage and goodwill, life overcomes death and good prevails over evil. The Security Council members have spent countless hours negotiating and adopting dozens of resolutions and presidential statements concerning the situation in Kosovo. Furthermore, the tax payers' money of Member States was spent for the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) to be deployed in Kosovo in the immediate aftermath of the war. We in Kosovo remember very vividly goming back to our homes in 1999 and finding everything in ashes. Fortunately, thanks to the Council's hard work and commitment, we were not alone. The United Nations and its agencies were at the forefront of our efforts to build peace and stability. Again, for that we will be forever grateful.

It is precisely because of that profound feeling of gratitude that we in Kosovo somehow feel uncomfortable that, every three months, we come back here to the Chamber, taking up the Council's valuable time, when we all know that the world we live in today has way too many pressing issues demanding the Council's attention.

Let us just do a quick reality check. First, this is 2016, not 1999. Secondly, as of 17 February 2008, Kosovo is no longer administered by the United Nations. Kosovo is a free, independent and sovereign State that is recognized by the overwhelming majority of the free nations of the world. Those facts are irreversible. The clock of history cannot be turned back. But yet we come here every three months to hear from my colleagues from Serbia about a parallel universe in which Kosovo's statehood is inexistent; in which Kosovo Albanians committed ethnic cleansing; in which the oppressor becomes the oppressed; in which Milošević is the hero and the Kosovo Liberation Army, an army that fought for liberation, is a terrorist group; and in which Kosovo violated international law, while Serbia was trying to protect it. That is the parallel universe that my colleagues from Belgrade try hard to portray.

In the real world, as I said, Kosovo is free, independent and sovereign — and that fact will not change. It is not only that we did not violate international law but, at Serbia's request, the International Court of Justice issued a clear and unambiguous separate opinion in its advisory opion on the *Accordance with internatinoal law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo* (see A/64/881). I shall quote part of it, as I am sure Council members have seen it:

> "No State can invoke territorial integrity in order to commit atrocities (such as the practices of torture, and ethnic cleansing, and massive forced displacement of the population), nor perpetrate them on the assumption of State sovereignty, nor commit atrocities and then rely on the claim of territorial integrity notwithstanding the sentiments and ineluctable resentments of the 'people' or 'population' victimized. What has happened in Kosovo is that the victimized "people" or "population" has sought independence, in reaction against systematic and long-lasting terror and oppression, perpetrated in flagrant breach of the fundamental principle of equality and non-discrimination. The basic lesson is clear: no State can use territory to destroy the population. Such atrocities amount to an absurd reversal of the ends of the State, which was created and exists for human beings, and not vice-versa." (*A/64/881/Add.1, para. 176*)

While we in Kosovo will never shy away from and remain committed to bringing justice to all the victims, regardless of their ethnicity and background, we are not seeing the same level of commitment from our neighbour to the North. Kosovo has taken unprecedented measures to address the alleged crimes by establishing the Specialist Chambers. Cooperation with international and local justice has never been a subject for negotiation in Kosovo. We want justice for all, because that is the only way we can bring peace to all the families that have lost their loved ones. In Kosovo we do not fear justice, because we have nothing to hide. Our cause and our war were just.

While we have gone to great lengths to address all the allegations made against us, Serbia has been anything but willing to prosecute war crimes. I have said it before in this Chamber, and I will say it again — 20,000 women were raped in Kosovo during the war. The number of people indicted for that is zero. Again, 1,262 children were brutally killed, and the number of people indicted is also zero. Thousands are missing, and there are very clear traces of the institutional chain of responsibility and command used to hide its tracks. As has been documented, the Serbian Government went so far as to erect buildings in the

mass grave sites. I will say it once again — the number of those indicted is zero.

There can be no reconciliation without accountability and justice. As we reaffirm our commitment to inter-State dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, mediated by High Representative Mogherini, I must stress that we in Kosovo are not satisfied with the pace of the implementation of the agreements that have been reached. A few days ago, our delegations agreed on the dialling code for Kosovo. That is certainly great news, as it will strengthen our independence and bring millions of dollars to our budget. However, I should remind the Council that we also celebrated agreement on the dialling code a year ago.

Our scepticism about the success of that dialogue is also amplified by Serbia's constant violations of the agreement on freedom of movement. Two Kosovo citizens, one of them a regional police commander, were recently arrested and detained under arrest warrants issued by the Serbian authorities. They were released — after being held in prison unnecessarily and for far too long — because no reasonable charges were brought against them. The Serbian authorities claim to have lists of arrest warrants against hundreds of Kosovan Albanians. That is absolutely unacceptable. Serbia has no jurisdiction over Kosovan citizens. Actions such as those we have witnessed recently are not only legally wrong, they also directly undermine our efforts to normalize the region and improve freedom of movement. Because they fear arrest, Kosovan Albanians do not feel comfortable travelling through Serbia any more. And this is not the first time that Serbia has violated international law and abused the agreement on freedom of movement reached in the high-level dialogue in Brussels. It is a demonstration of the Serbian Government's attitude in insolently provoking Kosovo's Government.

If we look back, however, it is not only former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army who have persistently featured on Serbia's wanted lists. I would like to recall here Serbia's lists of arrest warrants issued even for various Western leaders, who include former President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of Defense William Cohen of the United States; former President Jacques Chirac and Premier Lionel Jospin of France; former Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair; former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; and many other ministers of foreign affairs and defence. The former NATO Secretaries-General Javier Solana and George Robertson and former NATO Supreme Commander in Europe, General Wesley Clark, were also among those accused. The bottom line is that the process of normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia does not end in Brussels, where the agreements are signed. They are meaningful only when they are implemented in our own countries.

Another clear demonstration of Serbia's lack of sincerity regarding normalization is the outrage that Belgrade has expressed over the new law we recently enacted concerning the Trepça mines. Serbia has also exploited the Serbian community in Kosovo as a means to its ends. The Trepça mines are in Kosovo, they belong to Kosovo and they will be managed by Kosovo. The Trepça law accords fully with Martti Ahtisaari's comprehensive proposal on Kosovo's final status and with our Constitution. And it was specifically UNMIK that assigned full authority over and management of public and socially owned enterprises to the-then Kosovo Trust Agency, which later became the Kosovo Privatization Agency. I know that my colleague has distributed complete background information on the new law to everyone here.

Serbia has no legal basis supporting its allegations about property rights relating to public property and enterprises located within the territory of the Republic of Kosovo. Any such efforts will meet with strong opposition from the Government and the people of Kosovo. Such behaviour undermines the normalization of relations between the Republic of Kosovo and Serbia. There is no legal basis to the claims of the Serbian authorities; their words and actions only exhibit colonial tendencies towards Kosovo. The time when decisions for Trepca and other Kosovo resources were made in Belgrade is over, once and for all.

On 13 October, 11 Members of Parliament representing the Serbian community in Kosovo sent a request to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo to review the applicability of the Law on Trepca with the provisions on property protection and the rights of communities of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. On 31 October, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kosovo ruled that Law No. 05/L-120 on Trepca is in compliance with the Constitution. The ruling stated that Kosovo-Serbian Members of Parliament did not substantiate their allegations on constitutional grounds and did not provide evidence indicating how and why the challenged law on Trepca

has violated the Constitution, either in procedure or in substance.

The Court further commented that the law on Trepca is not limited to one or another ethnic community in Kosovo but is designed for the well-being of the whole of society. There is no evidence as to how and why Kosovo Serbs would be damaged this this law; quite the opposite is true. Making Trepca and other Kosovo resources fully functional means permitting and allowing all Kosovo citizens to work and prosper. We hope that Serbian representatives in Kosovo will start making their own decisions without any fear or pressure from Belgrade, and that they decide to re-engage in the parliamentary and institutional life. That is the only way forward.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to also address the preliminary observations of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Karima Bennoune.

As to the number of displaced people, to claim that 200,000 thousand Serbs were displaced after the war from Kosovo is factually incorrect. If that had been the case, then no single Serb would be living in Kosovo today. According to the census organized in 1991, at a time when Kosovo was under Serbian occupation, the number of Serbs living in Kosovo was 194,000. Unfortunately, to this date we still do not know the accurate number of Serbs living in Kosovo. That is because when Kosovo institutions organized the census in 2011, the Government of Serbia unleashed a very aggressive campaign to discourage the participation of the Serbian community. The smear campaign went so far as to label registration in the census as an act of betrayal. For us, this is not about numbers; even if only one Kosovo Serb cannot return, for us that is one too many.

At the same time, we must also remember that not all Serbs who fled Kosovo after the war were actually citizens of Kosovo. When the war erupted in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, entire neighbourhoods were built in several locations in Kosovo to accommodate Serbs who used to live in those parts of the former Yugoslavia. Some of them decided to stay, as is the case of the Marević family, which came to Kosovo in July 1995. Today, one of the members of that family is a Minister for Local Government in the Republic of Kosovo.

In addition, in line with our Constitution, dual citizenship is allowed. Kosovo Serbs who are also citizens of Serbia have a constitutional right to vote in the Serbian Parliamentary elections. In the absence of a Serbian embassy in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission administers the process in Kosovo. According to data from the 2016 parliamentary elections, 106,094 voters in Kosovo were eligible to vote in those elections. Obviously, the numbers do not match up. Either the Serbian Election Commission inflated the number of Serb voters in Kosovo, or the number of Serbian displaced people is inflated.

We will only get the full picture once we organize the next census. We will spare no effort to create better living conditions for all Serbs living in Kosovo. Every citizen of Kosovo is free to return. The Kosovo Government has spent tens of millions on different projects, building homes and supporting sustainable return. As enshrined in our Constitution, Kosovo belongs to all its citizens. However, we also need to be cautious and work with the local communities, and not provoke unpleasant situations like the one we witnessed in late August in the village of Mushtisht in the municipality of Suharekë, when visiting Serbian pilgrims were met with protests from the Albanian villagers seeking justice for the crimes committed during the war in their village.

On 3 April 1999, the Serbian army, with the assistance of some local Serbs, deported the entire local Albanian population, killing 14 civilians and destroying, looting or burning down every single house in the village — 1,051 of them, to be more precise. According to the testimonies collected by several human rights organizations, 122 local Serbs were active members of the Serbian military and paramilitary forces. These are small communities where everybody knows one another. Everybody knows what happened, and everybody knows who did what, and yet no one was ever indicted for the crimes committed there. That is why justice is so important. It has been said time and time again by people much wiser than me that true peace is not only the absence of war, but the presence of justice. All victims in Kosovo, regardless of their ethnicity, deserve truth and justice. That is the only way we can build peace and reconciliation.

Another issue that is repeatedly brought to the Chamber by my colleagues from Serbia is the state of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo. Allow me to state that the Kosovo Constitution provides unprecedented rights for the protection of the Serbian Orthodox sites

in Kosovo. It is not only our constitutional duty to protect and preserve our shared cultural and religious heritage; it is also our moral duty. During the last war in Kosovo, Serbian forces destroyed 218 mosques and other historic or religious sites in my country, including centuries-old libraries. Unfortunately, we also saw scenes of attack and destruction in the March riots in 2004, when around 35 Orthodox sites were attacked. We in Kosovo condemned those acts in the strongest terms. Over $10 million were allocated in the budget of Kosovo to repair the damage, and many international donors have contributed with additional funds.

Religious tolerance has been the backbone of our society. Churches and mosques share the same yard in many cities in Kosovo. Interfaith tolerance had always functioned in Kosovo until politics decided to step in. There is only one Orthodox Church in Kosovo with which we have a problem, and that is the church that the Milosević regime decided to build on the premises of the Public University of Pristina. That is the church my colleague was referring to.

Let me remind those present that construction on that Church began in 1992, at a time when our autonomy was revoked and when the University of Pristina closed its doors to all Albanian students and professors, including my own. That object lately has become a source of tension, and the only heritage it bears is that of repression. It stands there as a reminder of a time when we were denied our most basic human rights. The Serbian Orthodox Church on the grounds of the University of Pristina campus was built illegally and by force as part of a campaign of repression, and we in Kosovo should preserve it as such.

Destruction is not the answer. That object should serve as a reminder of very difficult times, but it should also serve to persuade the clerics who accepted the illegal building of the church by Milosević to do some soul-searching and confront the role they played when they acted in unison with the Milosević regime. Kosovo is a secular republic. It is multireligious and multicultural, and we will fight to preserve it as such. Any attempt to change the fabric of our society will be meet with resistance by our people and action from our Government.

Just last week, thanks to the cooperation of Kosovo, Albanian and Macedonian law enforcement institutions, a terrorist group was apprehended. That is yet another reason why Kosovo must become part of the global family. Most of the challenges we face are borderless, and cross-border cooperation and coordinated actions and responses to those threats are necessary. We therefore regret that INTERPOL has decided to postpone voting on three applicant countries until the criteria for membership are revised. We believe that we should all be treated on individual merits. Kosovo's request to join should be considered because we meet the criteria. Transparency International highlighted in a report last week that the Kosovo police is the most credible and trusted police force in the region. We believe that not only Kosovo, but also INTERPOL would gain from our membership, and we are convinced that in the coming sessions our request will be put forward.

We in Kosovo are fully aware that there is much more work that needs to be done in order to meet the rightful expectations of the Kosovo people. Internally, we have realized that independence is not self-sufficient. People want more jobs, better education and health care. They want to be equal citizens of the global family of the free nations of the world. And it is our job to make sure that what we leave behind for the future generations is a republic in which everyone, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation, has equal opportunities to prosper. To achieve that goal, there is more that needs to be done, but it is a goal worth fighting for.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Çitaku for her statement.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for the very comprehensive briefing on the situation that he gave via video-teleconference from Pristina, and we reiterate our full support to him as he carries out his important functions. I also thank the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and the Ambassador of Kosovo, Ms. Vlora Çitaku, for the statements they have just delivered.

I will begin by once again recalling our desire to see a review of the regularity with which the Security Council considers the situation in Kosovo, given the improvement in the security situation and the progress that has been made in strengthening Kosovo's institutions. We also believe that those positive developments justify ongoing efforts to

reconfigure the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo with respect to its structure, size, number of staff and activities. Alongside a number of our partners, we call on the Secretary-General to formulate recommendations along those lines in his forthcoming report.

France remains convinced that Kosovo's future is no longer being determined primarily within the Security Council, but rather through the political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of the European Union. Although there have been tensions in the dialogue over the past few months, progress has been made. I am thinking in particular of the agreement on telecommunications of 13 November, the agreement on license plates for vehicles to facilitate traffic between Serbia and Kosovo, or the continuation of work on the Mitrovica bridge. We welcome these positive developments, which must have a concrete impact on the living conditions of the people on the ground. It is important in this respect that the technical aspects of these agreements should be implemented within the time limits laid down.

However, this progress is not sufficient. We therefore expect that all the commitments entered into under the agreements concluded under the auspices of the European Union will be implemented as soon as possible, including with regard to the creation of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities. This is a key element of the dialogue. We therefore urge the Kosovo and Serbian authorities to intensify their efforts to produce even more concrete results in the months to come. The normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina remains in general a prerequisite for their respective advances towards European integration, which were further encouraged at the Paris-Balkans 2016 summit held on 4 July. We invite Serbs and Kosovars to engage on all subjects with a view to normalization, including on the Trepca issue.

Ongoing efforts to consolidate the rule of law in Kosovo must remain a priority. The integration of new Serbian personnel into the Kosovo judicial system is moving in the right direction. The reduction in the number of incidents involving minorities, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/901), is also good news. However, we expect Kosovo to pursue its efforts in the fight against corruption and organized crime.

Stengthening the rule of law also requires the fight against radicalization in all its forms. France welcomes the unconditional commitment of Kosovo in this regard, both locally and within the Global Coalition against Da'esh. I also take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which contributes every day to the rule of law and security there. France also wishes to stress the need to ease the tensions of recent months on Kosovo's domestic political scene.

The construction of an independent, modern and democratic State requires the establishment of a calm and responsible dialogue between the various components of the political field, in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution and in the context of the proper functioning of existing institutions. We are particularly concerned about the tensions arising from the process of ratifying the border delineation agreement with Montenegro. In that context, the Kosovo authorities must continue to mobilize in favour of dialogue among the various political forces and the establishment of a peaceful and inclusive society.

Finally, I conclude by stressing that France will continue to support the efforts of the Kosovo authorities in favour of the international recognition of their State.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for his briefing and insightful analysis of the situation prevailing in Kosovo. We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. We also welcome Ambassador Vlora Çitaku to this debate.

I shall start by reiterating Angola's stand on the issue of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. For Angola, resolution 1244 (1999) continues to be the applicable legal framework for reaching a comprehensive solution for Kosovo through dialogue and negotiation based on the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions.

Regarding the situation in Kosovo, the report of the Secretary-General on UNMIK (S/2016/901) describes a less virtuous situation by comparison to the previous three periods. Increasing tensions, political violence and public protests are on the rise, whether relating to the delineation of the border with

Montenegro, which remains the most contentious issue in Kosovo's political debate; the law on the Trepca mining complex, which has the potential to seriously undermine relations between Belgrade and Pristina; or the freeze of participation by Kosovo Serb members of the Assembly and the Government in official activities. Furthermore, the disruption of the work of the Kosovo Assembly, due to the aggressive actions and disruptive tactics of some parties, is a very negative development. In short, a number of sensitive issues — including the return of Serbs to their lands of origin — and political tensions between the Government and the opposition parties continue to undermine the normal functioning of Kosovo's institutions.

We welcome the commitment of the new Serbian Government, sworn in on 11 August, to proceeding with and intensifying dialogue with Pristina and maintaining its support for the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, as well as improved cooperation between the municipalities of northern Kosovo and Pristina-based ministries. It is our expectation that common ground will be reached and that an agreement establishing the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo will finally be implemented.

However, the report further highlights the slow implementation of the agreements reached within the dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU), despite signals of commitment on the part of the parties to moving forward, including on the issues of free movement, telecommunications and integration of the Kosovo judiciary. The issues of returns, reconciliation, the protection of cultural heritage and community relations still have a long way to go. The reported security incidents, physical assaults, verbal threats, robberies targeting returnees and the vandalism of property are matters of concern.

Against that tense backdrop, we warmly commend the example set by the President of Kosovo, Mr. Hashim Thaçi, by paying his respects to past Serb victims of sectarian violence in an effort to change attitudes and to promote reconciliation. In that regard, we echo the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia in expressing the expectation that this visit will be transformed into a palpable, positive step forward in the furtherance of security and respect for the rights of non-Albanian communities.

In conclusion, we underline the fundamental role played by the United Nations, through UNMIK, in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, as well as its cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, and its engagement with Pristina and Belgrade. We acknowledge the positive results achieved in tackling organized crime and corruption in Kosovo, indictments for terrorism-related offences, and the fight against incitement to nationalistic, racial, religious or ethnic hatred, discord and intolerance. We remain confident that the political leaders of Belgrade and Pristina will be able to fulfil their commitments and implement the agreements reached under the EU-facilitated dialogue process. We hope that the dialogue will proceed in good faith and in a results-oriented manner aimed at building a better future for all peoples in the Balkans.

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): I, too, welcome First Deputy Prime Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku to the Security Council today, and thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing.

New Zealand strongly supports dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina aimed at normalizing relations, and the European Union's support for that process. We encourage the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo to engage constructively in that dialogue with sincerity and determination to achieve concrete results for their people. We reiterate the Secretary-General's call for both sides to seek fair and lasting compromises.

While a number of agreements have emerged from the dialogue, the pace of implementing them has been relatively slow in some instances. We were pleased to learn about the recent agreement relating to telecommunications and we look forward to seeing progress on Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo. We encourage both sides to make progress on other issues identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/901), including those of internally displaced persons and of missing persons. Implementation of agreements reached within the dialogue is in the best interest of all of Kosovo's communities. Therefore, we hope that both sides can focus on delivering on their commitments and refrain from taking actions which unnecessarily divert energy away from constructive dialogue.

The previous report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/666) noted a significant reduction in aggressive

protests and political violence. We are, therefore, disappointed to see a recurrence of such incidents, including disruptive tactics in the Kosovo Assembly. When elected representatives engage in such behaviour, what example does that set for the communities they represent? We encourage those parties who oppose the use of violence to achieve political objectives to continue to distance themselves from that behaviour, to send a clear message that concerns must be addressed through peaceful and normal democratic processes.

Previously, New Zealand has welcomed progress towards the establishment of a specialized court to try cases brought forward by the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. We are therefore pleased to see another step taken in that direction with the recent appointment of a specialist prosecutor. We look forward to the court becoming operational as soon as possible and contributing to the broader process of reconciliation.

Finally, and as we have said throughout our Council term, we believe the Council should take a more flexible approach as to how and when it considers this agenda item. The current frequency of meetings is not justified by the situation on the ground, especially when contrasted against other pressing issues on the Council's agenda. We say that not to diminish the range and strength of views that exist on the question of Kosovo or to suggest that everything is perfect in Kosovo. Rather, we believe that the Council has a responsibility to organize its work in a manner that directs its time and energy towards the peace and security challenges that most urgently demand our attention. In that regard, we would also be open to considering a possible restructuring of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo to reflect the improving realities on the ground with the passage of time.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing. I also thank the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their statements.

Uruguay, a civilized nation, understands that compliance with resolution 1244 (1999), including full respect for Serbia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, is the international legal basis for resolving the situation in Kosovo. As such, it calls for political dialogue and constructive approaches that may lead to solutions that promote progress and stability in the region. Despite certain general economic and political progress, internal political tension and violent outbreaks are challenges we must continue to address. In that regard, Uruguay rejects of the use of violence and encourages all parties to find common ground that will lead to stability and cover the entire population of Kosovo.

We also welcome Sunday's technical agreement on telecommunications as well as progress in the reconstruction of Mitrovica Bridge. As for the recent tensions over the Trepca mining complex, I call on the parties to seek a solution through political dialogue.

I want to raise three important aspects that will help reconcile the various communities that live in Kosovo: the protection of cultural property, respect for the differences within the communities, and the living conditions of internally displaced persons.

From her visit to Kosovo in October, Ms. Karima Bennoune, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, expressed concern over the politicization of cultural heritage. Respect for the culture and religious beliefs of every community, as well as policies aimed at minorities, are essential to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, and will help internally displaced persons return to their homes.

According to Mr. Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights of internally displaced persons, while positive measures have been taken, the authorities must redouble efforts to achieve lasting solutions for those who have been internally displaced for 17 years. Of particular concern is the situation of communities of minorities and the most vulnerable displaced persons. I also agree with his view that the international community must follow up and support those efforts.

Uruguay underscores the importance of the accountability, access to justice and, in particular, cooperation with the special court set up to judge crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army. We also echo the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/901) regarding the protection of witnesses in trials for crimes committed in Kosovo during the 1998-1999 conflict. Moreover, Uruguay agrees with the conclusions of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the need to prioritize policies that give voice to survivors of sexual violence in conflicts and, in

particular, its defence of providing full reparation to the victims of sexual violence in the Kosovo conflict.

Finally, I want to express our support for and recognition of the work of Special Representative Mr. Zahir Tanin and UNMIK, in their task of promoting security, stability and the respect for human rights, as well as to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the United Nations agencies on the ground.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): As my first order of business, I would like to convey my thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his very comprehensive and detailed briefing and update on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo report (S/2016/901). We would like to once again underscore our support for his efforts to strengthen security and stability and the respect for human rights in Kosovo. I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku. I thank both of them for their statements.

We strongly support efforts to implement the agreements reached between Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of the European Union (EU). We are nonetheless disappointed to learn of the delay in the implementation of the provisions of those agreements. We nonetheless commend to the progress that has been achieved, most notably, in the recent agreement concluded between the two parties pertaining to telecommunications, which we note was reached under EU supervision.

There can be no alternative to dialogue, and we call on leaders in Belgrade and Pristina to relaunch high-level dialogue without further delay in order to achieve consensus, find fair solutions and guarantee the full implementation and roll-out of the agreements reached in August 2015. We hope that the recent agreement on telecommunications will breathe new life into the process of addressing outstanding issues, particularly the issue of heritage assets.

We also welcome the positive signs highlighted in the report, indicating the genuine desire of both parties to establish the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in order to protect the freedoms and rights of the Serb populations. We call on both parties to fully implement the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities as quickly as possible in order to strengthen regional stability and further the process of reconciliation. We attach a great deal of importance to enhanced cooperation with the Council with regard to reporting. We call on all parties to enhance and extend their dialogue in order to include more people in the decision-making process, particularly those that have a direct impact on the lives of the people concerned, so that their voices are heard.

We support efforts to improve regional stability and security. That is one of the pillars of Egypt's foreign policy, because we believe it is important to enhance the political and economic future of the region. Against that backdrop, we are concerned by the current political stalemate with regard to the delineation of the border between Kosovo and Montenegro. We call on both parties to find a solution to the stalemate as soon as possible so as to resolve the border delineation issue and strengthen domestic and regional security.

We must also ramp up efforts for regional integration and reject speech aimed at stoking animosities in the region and sowing further division. Egypt supports the efforts and work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and all regional and international organizations. We firmly welcome the key role played by UNMIK in Kosovo as it seeks to strengthen security, respect for human rights and stability. We also welcome the very important role played by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, my good friend Ambassador Tanin, for his briefing and for sharing his thoughts with us. I also once again welcome the presence in the Security Council of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

I would like to begin what will be my last statement in the Council, at least as a member, on this agenda item by reiterating Spain's gratitude for the excellent work of Ambassador Tanin and our firm and unwavering support for him and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Their work is important and necessary, but also of great complexity in the light, inter alia, of the reiterated issue of defining the Mission's purpose. We believe

that the current lack of headway in various spheres on the ground makes the work of UNMIK doubly relevant, in particular its efforts to foster reconciliation between the communities, promote and protect human rights, and improve governance at the local level. It is precisely at this local level that UNMIK has chosen to prioritize its actions, because it is the key to unlocking the vault of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence that we all desire for Kosovo. It is the objective we all share, but that unfortunately we continue to be unable to fully achieve.

The future of Kosovo and the entire Western Balkans necessarily depends on overcoming division, finding mutual understanding on prevailing needs, and jointly constructing a progressive future. In this process, we must acknowledge that the European Union plays a crucial role. However, we must ensure that in the future the citizens themselves must play that role with sincere and unconditional commitment. Moerover, we can support only those processes that are jointly spearheaded by the citizens themselves.

Among those, the most noteworthy event was without a doubt the Brussels dialogue facilitated by the European Union — first, because it was jointly determined by the parties, and secondly, because, independent of the political or ethnic affiliations of citizens, the dialogue process placed the region within the framework of the values and principles of the European Union. Nevertheless, despite the aspirations created at the outset, the dialogue was unable to achieve major results in 2016, which is about to end. It is therefore necessary to restart the dialogue in good faith and in a constructive manner, particularly at the highest level, and for the parties to renew their commitment to the implementation of and compliance with the agreements already reached.

Spain welcomes the recent telecommunications agreement and other small, as yet incomplete measures, such as the work to reconstruct the Mitrovica Bridge. However, other recent measures, such as the adoption of the so-called nationalization law of Trepca, openly contribute, due to their unilateral nature, to undermining the spirit of dialogue. It is indispensable that the parties avoid adopting unilateral measures that erode the necessary mutual trust, neutralize progress and further himder progress. There is a need to work together in good faith to implement the agreements reached to date in the context of dialogue, and to work towards reaching new agreements. In that regard, the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities remains key to ending the current deadlock situation, so that the process becomes a priority for all parties.

We are aware of the domestic difficulties that have been the hallmark of the political situation on the ground throughout this year. However, these difficulties cannot be used as a pretext. The same is true, if not more so, of the use of political violence and failure to respect the rules of the game of democracy.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the two essential elements of the Spanish position, combining coherence, and this without prejudice for its principled position, with a constructive spirit, which allows us to support any measure or process which, like the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, not only benefits the population of the territory but also the stability of the entire Western Balkans region.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing today. I welcome Ambassador Çitaku and First Deputy Prime Minister Dačić back to the Security Council and I thank them both for their statements.

It has been less than three months since the last briefing on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (see S/PV.7660). In that time, a great deal has happened in the world. The United Nations chose a new Secretary-General, and the United States chose a new president. But in truth very little has happened in Kosovo that warrants the Council to spend yet another afternoon discussing UNMIK. In the last 11 weeks, we have spent more time debating Kosovo in this Chamber than we have spent discussing North Korea and its missile tests.

As New Zealand and France have already said, this is clearly unnecessary. As the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson saw during his visit to Pristina and Belgrade last week, the people of Kosovo and Serbia no longer live in the world we hear about in this Chamber. Instead, they live in a world where their prospects for the future matter more than the divisions of the past. It is the future that the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo both want, as they made clear to my Foreign Secretary, and it is a future that the Security Council has a responsibility to help realize.

It was in that positive, forward-looking spirit that London played host to the United Kingdom-United States Kosovo Investment Forum this month. Over 150 companies heard about the great potential of Kosovo, the potential of rich natural resources, the potential of unexplored reserves of lead, silver and chrome, and, of course, the great potential of the dynamic, talented young men and women of Kosovo. It is a potential clearly seen in the Trepča mines, which could bring economic prosperity to all of Kosovo. It is vital that the Government continue to consult transparently on the future of this important economic asset, and it is this spirit of consultation and of dialogue that is so necessary to the realization of Kosovo's potential.

This is most clearly seen in the dialogue facilitated by the European Union (EU). I would like to welcome the commitment to the dialogue shown by both sides. But as the Special Representative has made clear, implementation of those commitments has slowed, which will only hold both countries back on their paths to membership in the EU. Normalization of relations is in the interests of the people of Kosovo, Serbia and the region. So let us call on all sides to redouble their efforts to deliver on their commitments.

But dialogue should not just be limited to meetings in Brussels. Dialogue is also needed between Kosovo's politicians in the Assembly. Disruption and violence have no place in political discourse, and I call on the opposition and the Government to work through their disagreements in a spirit of dialogue, not confrontation.

But away from the destruction in the Assembly, the latest UNMIK report (S/2016/901) also makes clear that dialogue is ongoing elsewhere. I want to pay tribute to President Thaçi and welcome his efforts to reach out to Kosovar Serbs on issues such as missing persons. I urge all parties to engage in that spirit so that together they can deal with issues of the past.

Dealing with the past, however, also requires accountability. As the Secretary-General's report sets out, a number of senior political figures involved in corruption or war crimes have been brought to justice in the past few months, which is a vital reaffirmation that the rule of law applies consistently to all people in Kosovo no matter their position, and that there will be no impunity. This pursuit of accountability must continue, including through the Special Court. Coming to terms with the past is a vital part of building a future for all in Kosovo.

I would like to close with a final reflection on dialogue. If there is perhaps too little dialogue in Kosovo at the moment, there is certainly too much dialogue about Kosovo here in New York. So I call again for a reduction in the number of these meetings and a reduction in the number of these reports. This would more accurately reflect the realities on the ground in Kosovo. In that spirit, we echo calls for increased efficiencies to be found in UNMIK and for a further scaling down of the Mission in line with its mandate. We also support calls for the Secretariat to present proposals for restructuring the Mission in the next report.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): I would like to thank Special Representative Tanin for his briefing and continued service.

I have always followed Kosovo with great interest since the time I spent from 1999 to 2000 serving as Chief Political Officer in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Today, I have brought with me a bottle of wine from Kosovo, a cabernet sauvignon from the Bodrumi i Vjetër winery. Now, I know that the Security Council is not a place to talk about wine, but I have a reason for doing so. I want to share a short anecdote with the Council.

In the Prizren region in the southern part of Kosovo, there are high-quality vineyards, believe it or not. But as a result of the conflict in the late 1990s, these vineyards fell into disuse and were abandoned. When in 1999 I visited the owner of one of these vineyards, he told me that it would take several years before they could revive the vineyard and produce grapes for wine again. In the meantime, he hoped he could obtain capital from Japan for investment and labour costs to care for the vines and prepare them to restart producing grapes.

These great vineyards had indeed fallen apart. Even if they once produced wonderful wine, I wondered, who would invest in them if they were not going to make a profit for several years? Then I was led inside the winery, where there were several large metallic tanks full of wine from years before. Naturally, I asked for a taste. It was delicious red wine with an exceptional aroma. An idea came to me: if this wine were sold, it could bring funds to the vintner. When I asked a Japanese colleague in UNMIK for help, he was able to connect the vineyard owner with a Japanese trading company. Seventeen years later, the vintner is producing

and exporting great wine like the wine I am holding, to acclaim from international wine lovers like me.

Throughout Kosovo there are countless people like this genial vintner who have regained self-sufficiency with the support of Governments, the United Nations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and, of course, individuals. It is the same thing for the Government of Kosovo. Since UNMIK's establishment 17 years ago, Kosovo has gained a Constitution, a Government and a parliament.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Kosovo achieved an enviable real economic growth of 4 per cent last year, with similar projections for the next five years. To be sure, Kosovo still faces many challenges. Progress it the talks between Kosovo and Serbia is slow, and the number of returnees to Kosovo remains small. However, the dialogue in Brussels between Kosovo and Serbia continues. Domestic political divisions on drawing the border with Montenegro are largely a matter for Kosovo's self-reliant democracy, although it is important to listen closely to the views of the minority.

That leads me to a larger point. Kosovo is not without problems, but its various problems should in general be solved by the judgment of the people of Kosovo and the people of the region. Why the United Nations? Let us seriously consider the possible withdrawal of UNMIK. On that matter, we should consider focusing our limited peacekeeping resources on other areas in the world where more serious clashes are evident. Having just returned from a Council visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that is especially clear to me.

A Security Council briefing every three months no longer seems necessary. To be honest, it gives me great pleasure to talk about my memories of Kosovo once every three months, but the efficient and effective functioning of the Council should take priority. Put in a very simple way, we have to consider how we use our time. Indeed, Council members have expressed keen interest in improving the Council's working methods. I therefore join New Zealand and the United Kingdom in their call for a reconsideration of the Council's working methods concerning the allocation of its time and energy. Even if a report is undertaken every three months, the Council has the flexibility to decide whether or not to receive a briefing on each occasion. It should be sufficient that the Council retains the flexibility to meet on the matter as needed, and UNMIK is a prime example. I look forward to discussing that matter further in the context of revising presidential note S/2010/507, although that really is just a matter of practice.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize our continued support and appreciation for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zahir Tanin. We look forward to his next report and look forward to celebrating the success of his work over a glass of Kosovo wine.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing, and the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, for his statement. We also welcome the presence of Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

In advocating for a peaceful solution to the dispute in Kosovo —

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My apologies for interrupting. I wanted to ask my colleague and friend from Japan to take his bottle of wine off the Security Council table, if he would. I would again like to remind everyone that this table is a sacred piece of furniture that should be treated with respect. As a matter of principle, we should not place glasses and bottles of wine on it.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): In advocating for a peaceful solution to the question of Kosovo, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates that resolution 1244 (1999) —

Mr. Okamura (Japan): Sorry, as to the bringing of a bottle of wine, I do not find it anywhere in the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council or in presidential note S/2010/507 a prohibition on bringing a bottle of wine to the Chamber.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): In advocating for a peaceful solution to the question of Kosovo, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates that resolution 1244 (1999) remains the applicable international legal basis for the achievement of a holistic solution to the dispute, within the framework of political negotiation. In that regard, we call for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia to be upheld, in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The

support of the United Nations, particularly through the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), so as to promote security, stability and respect for human rights remains crucial for fulfilling the commitments entered into. That work has been complemented by the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX).

However, we express our concern in the light of the scant progress made in terms of the European Union-facilitated talks concerning the process of implementing of the 19 April 2013 First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations. In that regard, we urge parties to redouble their efforts in the quest for a political, peaceful, fair and lasting solution, within the framework of international law and in compliance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Brussels Agreements.

Although the report (S/2016/901) indicates that the security situation has remained stable over the past few months, we regret the acts of violence perpetrated by certain political actors as well as the difficulties faced by Serbs seeking to exercise their right of return. In that connection, we believe it is vitally important that full respect for the human rights of displaced persons and minorities be promoted, as well as ensuring that they can return to their places of origin, in order to ensure that those citizens can fully enjoy all of their human rights without discrimination.

However, we are concerned by the fact that acts of violence are still being perpetrated, targeting Kosovo Serb civilians in certain areas. We therefore call on parties to take relevant measures to overcome the situation and prevent persecution and hostilities based on ethnic or religious grounds. Moreover, we are alarmed by the fact that the sale of business and properties in Kosovo undermines the rights of Kosovo Serb minorities and has become an additional controversial element that is impeding the return of displaced persons to their home communities. It is worth pointing out that the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo has not yet been established. We therefore urge the parties to intensify their efforts in that regard, as was agreed in Brussels at the highest level.

The issue of clarifying the situation of people who went missing during the war is still a high-priority issue. In that regard, we urge interested parties to intensify their joint efforts on that matter. We welcome the decision to establish an analysis team to support the sub-working group on forensic issues.

In terms of cultural and religious heritage, we underscore the need for the parties to work together to deliver effective protection for the important heritage of the different Kosovo communities, which will allow all people to participate in cultural life without discrimination and to be able to access and enjoy their cultural heritage.

In terms of the fight against impunity, we would like to highlight the headway made towards ratifying the agreement with the Government of the Netherlands, as well as the fact that the agreement is now in the final phase of the review process. It should serve to streamline the work of the Specialist Chambers in investigating the allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the armed conflict in Kosovo. The application of justice in these cases in the framework of due process will certainly contribute to reconciliation and peace among all parties.

With regard to the fight against terrorism, we commend the efforts undertaken to combat this scourge, such as the sentences handed down to some citizens accused of joining or trying to join Da'esh. Our country supports measures to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, which must be accompanied by effective strategies to address such issues as marginalization, poverty, violence and intolerant ideologies, with a view to preventing radicalization and with a special focus on young people. Efforts must also be made to effectively implement Security Council and General Assembly resolutions prohibiting the financing, training and transfer of arms to the aforementioned terrorist groups.

In conclusion, we reiterate that dialogue and cooperation between the parties are the only way for countries to shake off the vestiges of violence and thereby achieve peace and stability. Now more than ever, it is essential that the parties continue to meet and ttalk at all levels, in full compliance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Brussels agreements of 2013.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): My delegation welcomes the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and Ambassador Vlora Çitaku of Kosovo back to New York and thanks them for their statements. I am also grateful to Special Representative Mr. Zahir Tanin for his briefing.

Years of persistent efforts by the leaders in implementing socioeconomic reforms have evidently borne fruits. We are pleased with the strong economic performance shown by Kosovo with a 4 per cent growth in its gross domestic product and a marked improvement in its global ranking for doing business, as reported by the World Bank. As Kosovo moves closer towards European Union integration, we envisage further intensified efforts by Kosovo to restructure its economy, implement economic reform measures and address the persisting challenge of high unemployment. The normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina remains a crucial aspect in paving the way towards European integration in the interests of peace, stability and prosperity in Kosovo and the region.

We therefore wish to see the resumption of the high-level European Union-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade as soon as possible. With respect to outstanding commitments, as agreed in the 15-point Brussels agreement, Malaysia urges Pristina and Belgrade to redouble their efforts in implementing the historic agreement. This includes the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities and the implementation of the action plan for telecommunications in Kosovo. We also welcome the recent progress made with regard to Kosovo's judicial integration and the redevelopment of the Mitrovica bridge.

I share the concerns on the political tensions relating to the issues of territorial delineation with Montenegro and the Trepca mining and industrial complex, as highlighted by Mr. Tanin today and the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2016/901). We call on the opposition parties and their supporters to abstain from political violence in expressing their grievances. We also urge all parties and stakeholders to avoid inflammatory rhetoric and to engage in dialogue and consultations in good faith to resolve the issues amicably and in accordance with the rule of law.

Malaysia commends President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo for his exemplary leadership and reconciliatory gesture in visiting memorials commemorating Kosovo's civilian victims in the conflict. His visits send a much needed signal of reconciliation, national unity, social integration and building a common future. We call on the people of Kosovo to similarly focus on rebuilding trust and confidence to cease the targeting of minorities, as well as religious and cultural sites.

Part of the effort to rebuild trust between the communities in Kosovo involves addressing the past. In that regard, Malaysia takes note of the appointment of the Chief Prosecutor of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers in the Netherlands to try cases arising from the findings of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. We also commend ongoing efforts by the Kosovo Government in countering terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization.

I join my other colleagues in reaffirming support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which continues to play a key role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. We commend the leadership of the Special Representative and the important role of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Kosovo Force in ensuring peace, security and the rule of law in Kosovo.

Lastly, my delegation strongly supports the call made by other Council members for a reduction in the frequency of Council meetings of UNMIK to better reflect the situation in Kosovo and in view of more pressing matters on the Council's agenda.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, for his briefing. I welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and thank him for his statement. China also listened carefully to the statement delivered by Ms. Vlora Çitaku.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. We understand the legitimate concerns of Serbia on the question of Kosovo. Resolution 1244 (1999) provides an important legal basis for resolving the issue of Kosovo. We must follow the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, within the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in order to reach appropriate settlements and solutions to the question of Kosovo acceptable to all relevant parties through dialogue and consultations.

China welcomes the establishment of the new Government in Serbia and appreciates the positive efforts of Serbia in seeking a political solution to the question of Kosovo. We hope that both Pristina and

Belgrade will resume high-level political dialogue at an early date in order to carry out pragmatic and constructive consultations and implement the relevant agreements already reached so as to effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups in Kosovo and advance national reconciliation. We hope that both parties will refrain from any words or actions that may lead to the complication and escalation of the situation in a joint effort to actively seek a sustainable solution to the question.

China commends the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Zahir Tanin. We support UNMIK in continuing to implement Security Council mandates. We hope that UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force will carry out their work, in accordance with their respective mandates, in order to play a constructive role in the proper settlement of the question of Kosovo.

The authority of the Security Council, as the main organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, should be respected and its seriousness must be protected.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and share the very serious concerns he has expressed with regard to the state of affairs in Kosovo. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, and his team for their work, and we thank him for his briefing on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which demonstrates that there are ongoing serious issues in the province.

We must note that the situation in Kosovo remains extremely unstable. There are a growing number of new cases of violence against Serbians. In order to resolve such cases, they must not be swept under the rug, but rather addressed directly.

In the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/901), references are made to the serious incident in the town of Mušutište on 28 August, in which Serbian pilgrims were subject to attack by nationalists. The rise in animosity against minorities bears witness to ongoing threats. Such threats are also posed to the physical safety of Kosovar Serbs. First and foremost, it is absolutely clear that that is the reason for the lack of significant progress in the return of refugees to Kosovo. Where are the security and prosperity we were promised when Kosovo was unilaterally declared independent? Regrettably, no response to that question exists.

The utmost attention must be paid to the matter of the protection of Serbian religious and cultural heritage. There are ongoing cases of interference by local authorities in the matter of the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church and of attempts to expropriate its property or complicate the use of sites belonging to it. The Church of Christ the Saviour in Pristina is systematically subject to vandalism. Obstacles are levied when addressing the consequences of such desecration and the rebuilding process. We are extremely concerned about the campaign to seize economic assets belonging to Serbian State companies and bodies.

A striking example is the recently adopted law on the nationalization of the mining complex, Trepca. The very sustenance of a significant portion of Serbians, those living in the north of the province, depends on that mining company. Such decisions do not help to resolve the situation. Indeed, in adopting that law, the leading Kosovar party did not bother to consult with its nominal partners in the coalition of the Assembly of Kosovo, the Serbian List. As a sign of protest, the Serbian List boycotted the activities of that body. Again, such methods do not contribute to national reconciliation. As Mr. Dačić rightly said, the attack was not on the complex, but rather on Serbians.

It is time for serious work with Pristina. Despite every effort, the mediators in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina have failed to break the stalemate. There is an increasing number of issues surrounding the dialogue. For the fourth year in a row, practically nothing has been done to implement the key agreement on the creation of the association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. Attempts are made to divert attention from the true cause of the state of affairs — the sabotaging of the agreement by Pristina by fomenting inter-Kosovar disputes on the legality of the delineation of the border with Montenegro, which supposedly is hampering the so-called Kosovo Government in its actions. We think that matters concerning the property of the Serbian State bodies, companies and private individuals in the province account for a large part of the problem and require greater attention from the

Mission. The Mission should manage that matter more actively.

The Kosovar authorities have had a symptomatic and almost allergic reaction to the recent court ruling with respect to former members of the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA). Attempts to invalidate the verdicts, including through the use of threats, demonstrate the context in which the work of the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office for the investigation into war crimes by the KLA is being conducted. Regrettably, preparation for the beginning of the court's work is marked by a lack of transparency. International bodies and countries participating in the drafting and implementation of that project are accountable to the Security Council in providing full, timely updates on the implementation of the project. The priority is to ensure the thorough investigation of crimes by the KLA and the punishment of perpetrators.

With regard to the work presently being undertaken to launch the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office to investigate war crimes by the KLA, we have questions about the status of the regular reporting of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) regarding the formation and functioning of the Specialist Chambers and its bodies, including the Office of the Specialist Prosecutor. Let us not forget that EULEX was approved by the Security Council in this very Chamber. I hope that my colleagues in the European Union will take this opportunity to talk to us about current developments.

Furthermore, we know that the prosecution of the Kosovars guilty of crimes has been entrusted to a most dubious body, the Specialist Court, which is being created by the unrecognized authorities of Kosovo, whose legal system can hardly be considered mature enough for the conduct of such serious legal proceedings. The system of appointing judges and the role of EULEX in it is far from transparent. For that matter, we ask to be informed about developments. We welcome the inclusion in the report of information, which we had called for time and again, regarding the investigation of the tragic cases in Kumanovo, Macedonia, in May 2015. We think that the matter should continue to be monitored until those responsible for that criminal terrorist act are identified and brought to justice.

I would also like to touch on the issue of the Kosovo Force (KFOR). We regret that there has been an attempt by KFOR, with thought of pretext to avoid contact with Russian representatives. It seems that our partners do not wish to discuss those issues, which does not serve to resolve them. We hope that today's meeting will send a message. We see violations of resolution 1244 (1999), as well as of the United Nations mandate, when attempts are made to transform KFOR into a full-fledged armed forced.

We take note of information with regard to an agreement reached on telecommunications between Belgrade and Pristina. Its implementation will be of key importance. That is the very weak link in the dialogue. No tangible progress has been made in carrying out key agreements on the creation of the association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo, since April 2013, but that is the key to guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of Serbians. We think that further delays in the process with invented pretexts can only further degrade the situation in Kosovo and around it.

In the current circumstances, keeping a watchful international eye on processes in Kosovo is of particular importance. In that connection, it is important to ensure stable staffing and budget parameters for UNMIK. We see no reason to review the practice of quarterly reporting on the Mission's activities. For now, the situation in Kosovo does not require that. In particular, we would like to underscore the fact that no one has the right to call into question, much less revoke, resolutions and make irresponsible statements in the Chamber. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully applicable and is still the obligatory international legal basis for the settlement of the situation in Kosovo.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I join other members of the Council in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing. Ukraine highly appreciates the work conducted by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo under the leadership of Mr. Tanin on the implementation of the relevant Security Council mandate. I also welcome the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivica Dačić, as well as Ms. Vlora Çitaku back to the Council and thank them for their statements.

Ukraine supports the political dialogue between the two sides, under European Union facilitation. In our view, that dialogue continues to be the cornerstone

on the road to reconciliation. It is a driver of reform and an important prerequisite for the region's further European integration. We are also convinced that there is no alternative to dialogue and cooperation within the Brussels process. It is crucial that the political leaders of the two sides demonstrate courage and farsightedness and continue searching for solutions that will bring peace, stability and prosperity to all people in Kosovo.

We witnessed some positive developments during the reporting period that give us cautious optimism for the future of Kosovo. In particular, we welcome the recent agreement reached between Belgrade and Pristina on telecommunications, which envisages the unimpeded work of Telekom Srbija in Kosovo and a dialing code for Kosovo. We hope that that progress will pave the way for resolving other outstanding issues.

We also welcome a new understanding reached on implementing the agreement on the reconstruciton of the main bridge in Mitrovica, as well as improved cooperation between the municipalities in northern Kosovo and the relevant Kosovo ministries, particularly concerning municipal finance. My delegation joins the Secretary-General in commending the efforts made at the municipal level to employ members of non-majority communities in local governance institutions.

That progress proves that the parties are able to put aside existing differences and concentrate on the dialogue in order to achieve the normalization of relations. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. We take note of the assessment that the implementation of the Brussels Agreement continues to be relatively slow. To our regret, we observe serious delays on many issues in the implementation of outstanding commitments, dangerous divisive rhetoric and even violence.

While we praise the declared commitment of both parties to move forward with the establishment of the Community of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo and the implementation of the agreements on the freedom of movement and the integration of the judiciary, that commitment should be translated into more specific and effective actions, since those issues constitute vital prerequisites for further enhanced relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

Political tensions concerning the issue of territorial delineation with Montenegro are negatively affecting Kosovo's European integration path, as the ratification of the demarcation agreement with Montenegro remains one of the requirements for visa liberalization with the European Union.

Another divisive issue that has a negative impact on the situation on the ground and undermines the efforts to establish confidence and trust between the sides is the ownership and structure of the Trepsca industrial complex. We are concerned about the dangerous inflammatory rhetoric that we have witnessed over the past month on that issue. We urge the parties to engage in more close consultations to find a way out of that situation. It is important to negotiate a solution and avoid further possible provocations and violence.

I would like to underscore that Ukraine commends the expressed commitment of both sides to intensify dialogue. That is what we need to focus on in the near future. That is what we need to adhere to in order to assure further stabilization of the situation, promote a better atmosphere for talks and, at the end of the day, ensure the prosperity of the whole region. I therefore wish to express Ukraine's full support for the Secretary-General's call on political leaders in Belgrade and Pristina to demonstrate courage and political will and to resume the high-level dialogue without delay. Belgrade and Pristina need to move full speed ahead with the implementation of the 19 April 2013 Brussels First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations by building trust among communities and finding compromise on the most difficult issues.

A certain role in that process is still played by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. However, we need to look to the future. It is high time to seriously consider our next steps of how to rationalize the Mission in terms of restructuring or downsizing, as well as to review the Council's timetable of consideration of the situation in Kosovo and its relevant reporting cycle, given the progress already achieved. We join the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Japan and others on that issue.

Ms. Coleman (United States of America): My delegation welcomes Foreign Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku. I also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin for his briefing.

We welcome the positive tone of the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2016/901) and its acknowledgement of the overall economic and political progress in Kosovo. We applaud the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for its commitment over the years in assisting Kosovo to

develop multiethnic, democratic institutions that uphold the rule of law and respect human rights. Through its continued and diligent commitment to a peaceful and stable Kosovo, UNMIK has fulfilled its mandate. The situation in Kosovo is drastically different from what it was when the Security Council adopted resolution 1244 (1999), and much has changed even since the Mission was restructured in 2008. It is time to streamline and rationalize UNMIK even further with respect to structure, size, personnel and tasks, as several Member States have already noted. We continue our call for increased efficiency and downscaling of the Mission in line with its mandate and realities on the ground in Kosovo and ask that the Secretariat present proposals for restructuring the Mission in its next regular report.

A number of us just returned from the Security Council's trip to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where United Nations peacekeepers are called upon to protect civilians from armed groups and where upwards of 700 civilians were killed in the past two years. While Kosovo faces challenges that would be expected of any young country, the Security Council does not have the luxury of deploying United Nations resources in Kosovo when they are so desperately needed to address active conflicts elsewhere, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Given the continued progress and overall stability in Kosovo, we also believe it is high time for the Council to adjust the reporting and briefing cycles. A three-month reporting cycle is simply not necessary, as several Member States have already noted. Kosovo has reached a point in its development where deliberate and methodical reform is required to further increase political and security stability, normalize relations with its neighbours and strengthen human rights and rule-of-law institutions. Those efforts take time. Of course, we should continue to track Kosovo's trajectory; but such close oversight by the Security Council is unwarranted. We once again urge fellow Council members to work with us to adjust the reporting period to six months.

We have seen positive signs of economic development in Kosovo. While it is true that according to the World Bank, gross domestic product gross ticked down slightly to 3.6 per cent, the Secretary-General's report also notes that that is a favourable rate as compared with neighbouring countries. We would also like to point out that it is a higher rate of growth than that experienced by over two thirds of Security Council members. As we have already heard from my Japanese colleague, that rate of growth is the envy of some. Therefore, the accompanying level of 33 per cent unemployment must be urgently addressed. We still believe that further economic reform can help improve governance, combat corruption, increase transparency and bolster the rule of law.

In that vein, we welcome efforts by the Government of Kosovo to put the Trepca mining enterprise on a path to successful restructuring. We recognize that that will be a difficult and contentious process that must be done openly and transparently with the inclusive representation of stakeholders. Trepca must be restructured in such a way as to provide maximum economic viability and with the benefit of the affected workers and communities in mind. UNMIK wrote regulations in 2002, which have since been incorporatee in Kosovo's laws and institutions, that form the legal basis for restructuring Trepca and other publicly or socially owned enterprises. It also established a special privatization court to adjudicate claims.

We also welcome the extension of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), which is helping to strengthen justice and fight corruption in Kosovo. Expanded joint training and foot patrols are clear signs of the established coordination that EULEX has achieved. Given Kosovo's accession to the International Federation of Association Football and the Union of European Football Associations, we also appreciate the guidelines produced by EULEX regarding the policing of international soccer matches. Sport is an opportunity to normalize relations and should be used to bring communities together, although bad behaviour by fans can quickly spiral out ofcontrol. Progress on justice and the rule of law will serve to combat corruption, help attract foreign investment and contribute to Kosovo's overall development.

It is unfortunate that political violence has delayed agreement on territorial delineation with Montenegro. That issue must be resolved. Tear gas, petrol bombs and rocket-propelled grenades have no place in civil political discourse.

We encourage the important work Kosovo is undertaking to address the serious problem of foreign fighters, and we applaud the recent arrest of individuals in Kosovo likely affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Syria. Foreign fighters present a threat to all countries and require a collective response.

The entire region, including Kosovo, needs an inclusive and integrated approach that includes international institutions, such as INTERPOL, to ensure cooperation and coordination on issues vital to the national security of all States Members of the United Nations. Kosovo's membership and participation in international organizations is not only good for Kosovo, but for the international community.

Finally, we believe all Member States should recognize Kosovo as an independent State. When Kosovo succeeds, the entire region will benefit. A democratic, stable and independent Kosovo is a force for regional stability, and to that end we welcome Kosovo and Serbia's efforts to pursue the normalization of relations through the European Union-facilitated dialogue. We commend the leaders in both Belgrade and Pristina for their willingness to make difficult decisions, and we continue to appreciate the High Representative Mogherini's facilitation of the talks. The United States reaffirms its support for Kosovo as it continues to develop a prosperous and peaceful multi-ethnic democracy, fully integrated into the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Senegal.

First, I would like to thank Ambassador Zahid Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary- General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), for the excellent briefing he has just delivered. I also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Minister of Serbia, and Ambassador Çitaku for their statements.

I am necessarily concerned about the unabated tensions mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/901), new tensions that undermine some of the progress made since the end of the conflict with the cooperation of stakeholders on both sides. Such progress made possible the agreement on telecommunications, which my delegation welcomes as important. In that regard, in order to reinvigorate the momentum towards ensuring lasting stability — which beyond Kosovo is a matter of concern for the entire Balkans region — we would strongly encourage the political players in Kosovo to work towards a calm political environment, on which the tenor of the dialogue with Belgrade depends, while also calling upon Serbian authorities to maintain and bolster their commitment to a constructive and calm dialogue with Pristina. My delegation joins the Secretary-General in welcoming the progress made to date by both parties in the context of the European Union-facilitated dialogue. We encourage partners and countries with influence to bring it to bear to continue to support the talks. In order to draw upon the achievements made in that framework, we think it crucial that the agreements reached until now be carried out effectively and that leaders on both side fully commit to resume dialogue in a constructive spirit. That remains the only way to normalize relations.

Recent developments noted in the report, in particular the political context leading to the ratification of the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro and the new law on the Trepca industrial complex, serve to remind us of the need for inclusive dialogue on all pending matters, both among domestic and foreign stakeholders. My delegation believes that difficulties can be overcome; certainly, they should not become an obstacle to the political process under way, especially with regard to implementing the agreement on integrating the Kosovo judiciary, where notable strides have been made. Along the same lines, we welcome the agreement reached on 5 August for the implementation of the agreement of 25 August on the reconstruction of the main bridge in Mitrovica. We would encourage parties to ensure the success of the agreement by upholding their outstanding obligations.

Senegal agrees with the Secretary-General that efforts are needed on the humanitarian and human rights fronts so as to increase the return of refugees, foment trust among the various communities and build diverse yet inclusive societies.

Similarly, with regard to the activities of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), whose mandate was extended to 14 June 2018, we welcome its shoring up of Kosovo's achievements in the area of defence, in promoting the rule of law and human rights and in combating terrorism and organized crime. Its support also contributed to the holding of a regional conference of police directors general in Skopje from 8 to 10 September, which included representatives from Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. We welcome UNMIK's activities to promote reconciliation, transitional justice and human rights and to support the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

In addition to encouraging dialogue, Senegal urges all stakeholders to make further strides towards peace and development, in particular by encouraging the implementation of the 25 August 2015 agreements in north Kosovo. We therefore reiterate our unstinting support to the joint EULEX-United Nations Development Programme project aimed at increasing trust among the communities by protecting cultural heritage. We would also like to see a strengthening of cooperation on information-exchange for resolving the issue of missing persons.

By way of conclusion, my delegation would like to pay tribute to Special Representative Tanin for his wise guidance of UNMIK. We also welcome the efforts made by the Kosovo Force, EULEX, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union. These are all stakeholders resolutely committed to peace and stability in Kosovo and the whole region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Serbia has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): In my statement earlier I said that Council members would hear a number of lies from Pristina's representative. One can ascertain from her statement how she perceives an ideal country. Simply put: If it is such an ideal country, I wonder why the migrants crossing through the Balkans do not go to Kosovo. Why do its citizens flee Kosovo for Western Europe? Next time, I could also inform the Council how many Kosovar Albanians are in possession of Serbian passports, and how our diplomatic and consular representative offices in Western Europe every day work with Kosovar Albanians.

What kind of country are we talking about? There was mention of crimes, rapes and murders. Why was no one accused? The Kosovo speaker, who represents it now, says that the number of those indicted for those crimes is zero. Well, that is their problem. Why did they not charge anyone? Why did they not say that this person or that person committed rape or murder? If, as was said, Serbia has no jurisdiction in Kosovo, why was nothing done about it in The Hague? Every one of Serbia's police and military was questioned at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague hundreds of times. It is impossible to bring charges based on the representative's fictional accounts recited here in the Security Council.

And what is going on with Oliver Ivanović? Ms. Çitaku says that we have arrested Kosovo's citizens. She urges that our people should be indicted, but when it comes to her citizens, everyone is innocent, right? So if according to her whoever may have been convicted is innocent, what is happening in the case of Oliver Ivanović? He has been under house arrest for months. Is there a single witness — Serbia has demanded to see a list — who can confirm the allegations made against him? The representative made a little mistake, because that list was erased after 2000 by those who bombed Serbia. But I have to declare here in New York, before the Security Council, that the decision to bomb Serbia was illegal and taken without the assent of the Council. I believe firmly that many who were on that list deserve to be tried, but the Tribunal found no legal basis for instigating proceedings against those who bombed Serbia. That was a judicial decision based on no decision of the Security Council. Of course, that list also includes people who were lauded by Kosovo — who were employed, permitted to research mining resources and given mobile phones.

Now the former Croatian Prime Minister Milanović turns to Kosovo. Is Wesley Clark now on the list of those working in Kosovo, having borne witness to Bernard Kouchner and William Walker claiming that Serbia was bombed? He was the Head of the Mission to Serbia of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and before any statements were made by any forensic experts, he said that those who died in Račak were the victims of Serbs. Now he is a national hero.

Ms. Çitaku speaks of colonialism. What is she talking about? What are the countries that have been liberated from colonialism? Does she have any idea at all of what colonialism is? The first capital of Serbia was in Kosovo. The seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church is in Kosovo. What kind of colonialism is that? Name any Albanian cultural monument dating back to that time. What is she talking about? She thinks that because she is here in this meeting, supported by some major Western Powers, that she can tell lies here. But in fact that support does not strengthen Kosovo's position; rather their support for the positions that Kosovo presents here undermines their own reputations. Ms. Çitaku mentioned Mr. Ahtisaari. Was it the Security Council that adopted the Ahtisaari proposal?

Ms. Çitaku has presented the dangerous thesis that everything in Kosovo belongs to Kosovo. The people there are living under capitalism, so can she actually tell them that everything located in Kosovo is the property of Kosovo? There should be some law about those rights. She does not even like Special Rapporteur Karima Bennoune, who has spoken of 200,000 displaced Serbs. The number is not important — even if it is only 50,000, they should be allowed to return. According to United Nations data, they amount to 1.9 per cent. Will the Council remain silent on this and say that those people do not have to go back? Is the Council going to legalize ethnic cleansing? it has no right to do that.

Regardless of our country's small size, when it is a question of our Church we will defend it. Ms. Çitaku claims that the church on the grounds of the campus of the University of Pristina is problematic because it was built under the Milošević regime. But what about the fourteenth-century church of Our Lady of Ljeviš, which Kosovo set on fire, and which was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List? When was that built? Does that have anything to do with Milošević? Where was Milošević in 1981, when there were demonstrations demanding Kosovar independence? There was always a plan for unification with Albania from the very start, and that should be admitted. She is not Kosovar; she is Albanian. Her country of origin is Albania. This is not about colonialism; it is about a national minority in someone else's country that has unilaterally declared independence.

I should like to point out to those here, including my friend from Japan, that this could happen to his country tomorrow. The fact that his country has over 100 million inhabitants does not give it more rights than Serbia. We do not have a principle that says we lost because Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was permitted and because some countries accepted it. It is really not nice that the United States has called on other countries to recognize Kosovo's unilateral declaration, thereby violating Serbia's territorial integrity. One hundred years ago, the only foreign flag that flew in front of the White House was Serbian, in recognition of Serbia's sacrifices during the First World War, when we lost a third of our population.

I am happy for the Ambassador of Japan and his bottle of wine. In the fourteenth century, Serbia's Tsar Dušan enacted a law protecting the quality and geographic origin of Kosovan wine. At the time, he was the only ruler owning 25 kilometres of vineyards between Veliko Hoča and Prizren. Needless to say, there is nothing that the representative of Pristina can say about that, because at the time her people did not live in Kosovo. We are therefore not colonizers, and such terms should not be used in this principal organ of the United Nations.

With regard to INTERPOL, of course Palestine was also on its agenda and the United States was not inclined to vote on that. Kosovo and Taiwan were on its agenda, too — or perhaps Taiwan was not on the agenda, but it was announced. Kosovo told everyone that it would be participating in the INTERPOL meeting, so why did it not submit its request? It did not submit it because it knew it would lose.

I will end in the same way that Ms. Çitaku began, by quoting her fictional statement. Today we are in 2016, not 1999. That is correct. Of course, the world has changed in the meantime. Today, those who bombed us, and for whom monuments have been raised in Pristina, are gone. The world has indeed changed. Today, those who supported Kosovo's positions are gone. The world has changed in the sense that people understand that this is about the violation of rights. Each and every violation of international rights is of a universal nature and is applicable to all. I respect the will of all, but we have to start with the legitimate interests of our own people.

I do not know if the names of squares and streets in Pristina will be changed, as the media has suggested, but in any case we do not need the support of anyone from outside. Let us resolve our problems by ourselves. The representative of Kosovo is hiding behind big brother. Let us talk and find a sustainable solution. No one is going to drop a solution on Kosovo in the same way they dropped the bombs in 1999. Unfortunately for Kosovo, that time is over.

The President (*spoke in French*): Ms. Çitaku has asked to make a further statement. I give her the floor.

Ms. Çitaku: I will be very considerate of the Council's time, but some of the issues raised by my colleague from Serbia deserve a response.

In fact, most of his statement, if it were not so troubling, given that it was delivered here in the Security Council, would have been amusing and entertaining. Accusing the international community, the leaders of the free world and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization of being involved in Kosovo for their own interests and our resources is insulting. Actually, Kosovo is a clear

example of the world coming together to defend human dignity, human life and humanitarian values.

For those who do not know, Kosovo is the size of Connecticut; it is a small country. By the way, we had borders long before we had our statehood. We are not actually very rich in natural resources. Our biggest resource is human resources — people. We have a young population, 70 per cent of whom are under 30. This human potential, which was liberated and enabled to live in freedom, is the only benefit and pleasure that the international community has gained. Sincerely, I am shocked and offended. I hope that my colleague from Serbia will reflect on these statements.

Secondly, the war in Kosovo did not happen 500 years ago or 70 years ago; it is a recent war. It happened in 1998 and 1999 before the eyes of the world, under the eyes of those in this Chamber, and journalists from the United States to Russia to China to Japan. Everybody was there and the images are real. Interpretations can change and be different, but facts cannot change. Facts are real.

I am sorry that my colleague is losing patience. I listened to him, and ask him to listen to me. I just hope that one day we will come to the Chamber and hear an apology and signs of remorse from Serbia, because ultimately that is in Serbia's interest as well. Can anyone imagine Germany, after the Second World War, accusing Allied forces of intervening to save Europe? I really hope that Serbia will reflect because, as I said, that is the only way the region will be able to move forward.

Unfortunately, our legislation and Constitution make it very clear against whom we can open investigations and indictments. We cannot indict people in absentia — when they are not physically present in Kosovo — and the fact is that most of the people who committed war crimes have left Kosovo. As far as Mr. Ivanović is concerned, he was indicted and has been brought to trial by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The Kosovo Government supports the role of EULEX, and we look forward to a time when all these trials are far behind us.

I apologize for taking more of the Council's time. I really felt offended and I know some others here did as well.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7812

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7812th meeting

Wednesday, 16 November 2016, 6.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Seck	(Senegal)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Alsayed
	France	Mrs. Gueguen Mohsen
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Walbridge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle Garcia
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thoume
	United States of America	Mr. Gee
	Uruguay	Ms. Graña
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-38840 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 6.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2016/17.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7813

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7813th meeting
Thursday, 17 November 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Seck	(Senegal)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mrs. Gueguen Mohsen
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Ms. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation: "Enhancing the strategic partnership in the area of countering extremist ideology"

Letter dated 11 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/965)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-38956 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation: "Enhancing the strategic partnership in the area of countering extremist ideology"

Letter dated 11 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/965)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency, Mr. Hameed Opeloyeru, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Professor and Chair of the Department of French and Romance Philology at Columbia University.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/965, which contains a letter dated 11 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Mr. Opeloyeru.

Mr. Opeloyeru: At the outset, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Government of Senegal for having taken the initiative of organizing this timely meeting. The fact that the Security Council has agreed to convene today's meeting on cooperation between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations shows clearly the importance it rightly attaches to this event. I would like to also underscore the significance of the excellent ideas contained in the concept note prepared by the delegation of Senegal (see S/2016/965), which further develops this vital issue.

Allow me to avail myself of the opportunity to congratulate Senegal on its outstanding performance during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and the presidency of the Council for this month. I wish to also convey my gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the tireless efforts he has exerted to strengthen the cooperation, which has now reached a strategic level, between the United Nations and OIC. We share his vision of the strategic cooperative relationship between our two organizations.I would like to also congratulate, on behalf of the Organization, Mr. António Guterres, for his election to become the next Secretary-General.

The goals and objectives of OIC and the United Nations are broadly similar. Both organizations are devoted to the cause of international peace, security and development, and share common challenges in all domains of human endeavour. The OIC vision, which puts people first, aims to develop human capital and achieve inclusive growth. It envisions its role as an effective partner for peace and development in the world.

Entrusted with a mission to defend the collective interests and just causes of its member States, OIC, based on its Charter, was established on the noble principles of peace, harmony, tolerance, brotherhood and equality of all human beings. The preamble of its Charter reaffirms the commitment of its Member States, which are all United Nations Members, to the Charter of the United Nations. It has therefore, since its establishment, set for itself as a primary task the realization of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, and has strived consistently to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why OIC continues address on a regular basis many issues that also top the agenda of the Security Council, such as the Middle East, Syria, Somalia, Mali, Libya, Afghanistan and the Central African Republic.

OIC and the United Nations have engaged in successful bilateral coordination and exchanges, which have been organized in Geneva and Jeddah, and thereby enhanced our levels of cooperation and sharing of best practices. In his recent statement, in September before the annual coordination meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the current General Assembly session, the United Nations Secretary-

General highlighted the successful partnership that has been developed by the two organizations in all areas of mutual concern and interest. On our part, we attach great importance to that relationship and are determined to even further enhance it with the aim of promoting peace, justice, human rights and development.

Based on our firm belief in the critical role that international organizations play, OIC has deployed tremendous efforts to build and sustain a network of close cooperative relationships, not only with United Nations but with other regional and subregional organizations, in order to secure a broad and inclusive platform for the benefit of global peace, security and socioeconomic development.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is a natural partner of the United Nations in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, the two of which are increasingly threatening every society, as well as international peace and security. OIC has consistently been at the forefront in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Cooperation with key international and regional partners in combating terrorism is among the key objectives of the OIC Charter. Adopting its code of conduct, as well as the Convention on Combating International Terrorism, in 1994 and 1999, respectively, OIC was among the first to formulate a clear and principled position against terrorism.

Fully committed to cooperating with the United Nations Secretariat and its relevant agencies, the OIC Secretary General welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism right after its release. Similarly, the OIC Member States expressed their support to the Plan of Action during the OIC Summit, held in Istanbul in April.

OIC views the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as a viable guideline for the Member States to counter terrorism, and the Plan of Action as a meaningful contribution to the effective implementation of pillars I and IV of the Strategy. As far as measures to eliminate the spread of terrorism are concerned, OIC organized, jointly with the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), a workshop back in 2013, to promote the implementation of resolution 1624 (2005). Currently, we are in talks with CTED to organize a second workshop with a broader scope, including the implementation of both resolution 1624 (2005) and resolution 2178 (2014). We are also in talks with CTED to see how we can benefit from its legal expertise as the OIC undertakes a revision of the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism.

Similarly, we are discussing with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force how we can cooperate towards promoting the implementation of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. In that sense, one of the concrete projects under consideration is a high-level event on the prevention of youth radicalization in the Middle East.

OIC believes that the first step in countering radicalization and preventing violent extremism should be to deprive terrorist groups of legitimacy in the eyes of the people they exploit by repudiating the very arguments they use to justify their criminal acts. On its part and based on its commitment to fighting terrorism and countering violent extremism, OIC works to delegitimize terrorist ideologies by developing counter-narratives to such extremist ideologies and propaganda, and by elevating credible and authentic religious voices that support tolerance and non-violence.

Earlier this month, in partnership with the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, OIC organized a workshop at ISESCO headquarters in Rabat as part of its efforts to combat extremism and promote a moderate Islamic narrative. The workshop discussed the role of religious education in promoting peace and combating violence. More specifically, it discussed ways in which religious schools and institutions can contribute to the broader education experience in promoting a proper interpretation of Islam and preventing children and youth from falling into trap of extremists.

Moreover, on 3 October, the OIC established a Centre for Dialogue, Peace and Understanding within its General Secretariat, and officially launched its website during the forty-third session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Tashkent later in the month. The Centre's primary mission is to counter incitement to all forms of terrorism, violence and extremism, particularly incitement through social networking platforms, media and cyberspace. Accordingly, the new OIC Centre aims to debunk extremist narratives through counter-messaging over social media outlets, as well as messaging on ideological subjects targeting Muslim youth, and to produce videos and animations

exposing the reality of terrorist groups claiming to be Islamic.

The OIC Programme of Action for 2016-2025, entitled OIC 2025, is anchored in the provisions of the OIC Charter, while the directions emanating from the OIC forums provide the conceptual framework for its development paradigm. It focuses on 17 priority areas, which include peace and security; poverty alleviation; trade, investment and finance; employment, infrastructure and industrialization; science, technology and innovation; climate change and sustainability; moderation, culture and interfaith harmony; the advancement and empowerment of women; human rights, good governance and accountability; information and communication technology and digital structure, among others.

The OIC Programme of Action has also given prominence to development programmes, including physical and human capital development, poverty eradication, the provision of social safety nets and youth empowerment. It is therefore our strong belief that OIC-2025 will serve to our member States as a solid basis for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, in its capacity as one of the leading intergovernmental organizations in the area of South-South cooperation, OIC has developed strong partnerships with the relevant institutions of the United Nations for the implementation of its various socioeconomic programmes aimed at promoting peacebuilding and conflict prevention among its 57 member States.

As international peace and development are now faced with many difficulties and challenges, it is imperative to respond to them collectively at the national, regional and international levels. In a rapidly changing world, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OIC will both promote multilateralism and boost the international collective security mechanism. To that end, OIC has continued to play an important role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, promoting post-conflict reconstruction and defusing humanitarian crises in its member States. It has also been active in combating violent extremism and terrorism, as well as in promoting socioeconomic development, as important contributions to the global efforts in the enhancement of international peace and security.

In that regard, OIC has expressed on many occasions that it stands ready to develop effective partnership with the United Nations to strengthen cooperation in all areas and to develop early responses to disputes and emerging crises. Consequently, the OIC General Secretariat has made sustained efforts to increase the role of the Organization in the maintenance of peace and security, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. In that context, OIC has set up a Peace, Security and Mediation Unit and a Department for Outreach and Dialogue. It has just launched its messaging centre to counter the narratives and discourse of extremists who seek to disrupt global peace and security.

In that regard, OIC has made valuable contributions to the work of the United Nations in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management, mediation, humanitarian assistance, the promotion of human rights, good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development through the many political, economic and social instruments and resources available to it. Accordingly, OIC has hosted at its headquarters in Jeddah a number of international contact groups, such as those for Afghanistan and Somalia, as well as regional organization mediation meetings and counter-terrorism workshops. The United Nations-OIC biannual consultation meeting provides an excellent opportunity for both organizations to identify all areas of cooperation, with a clear matrix and specific time frame for implementation.

We look forward to more engagement with the United Nations to enhance the capacity of OIC on the basis of its needs and strategic priorities so as to enable it to act as an effective partner to the United Nations in addressing the immediate and future challenges that face the Muslim world. The example of partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the areas of peace, security and development is a good example to be followed in that regard.

In conclusion, I should like to renew the commitment of OIC to remaining a strong and active partner of the United Nations in addressing issues of mutual interest and concern, as well as current and future challenges, in defence and promotion of global peace, security and development. We have achieved a great deal together, but I believe that more remains to be done. And it is only through close and coherent cooperation, collaboration and coordination that both organizations can make our world a more prosperous and secure environment for all our peoples.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Opeloyeru for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jenča.

Mr. Jenča: I thank Senegal for organizing this briefing on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The holding of this meeting clearly demonstrates that the two organizations are more than ever willing to work together to address global and regional challenges. The magnitude and complexity of those challenges are simply too big for any country or organization to tackle alone. To be successful in preventing and resolving conflicts, we need to join forces with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to devise joint strategies and draw on our comparative advantages.

In that regard, the Secretary-General has taken note of OIC Programme of Action 2016-2025, adopted by the Islamic Summit Conference in Istanbul in April, and its Ten-Year Programme of Action, which identified conflict situations as a major challenge facing the Islamic Ummah in the twenty-first century. The Secretary-General welcomes the communiqué of the thirteenth Islamic Summit Conference and its support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

The United Nations has been working closely with OIC for more than 20 years to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding. In the past years, the United Nations, particularly through the Department of Political Affairs, has stepped up its cooperation with the regional organization and has engaged with it to promote a deeper political dialogue. There is no doubt that our cooperation has not been without challenges; resources, capabilities and mandates vary, and our memberships, although overlapping, are different. The best approach to those challenges is to deepen our strategic dialogue to forge common approaches to emerging crises.

In that sense, cooperation between the United Nations and OIC is reinforced through direct contact between the secretariats of the two organizations, as well as the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system and OIC. The United Nations Secretary-General and the OIC Secretary General meet during General Assembly sessions and on many other occasions. The United Nations supports the OIC call to strengthen its role in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in Member States, as well as in conflict situations involving Muslim communities.

The United Nations has taken a number of steps to institutionalize its relationship with OIC by helping to strengthen its capacity through mediation and electoral assistance, and by holding desk-to-desk talks with OIC on areas of mutual concern, such as peace and security, economic cooperation and humanitarian issues. The secretariats of the United Nations and the OIC hold general cooperation meetings every two years, as mandated by the General Assembly. Those meetings are attended by a large number of agencies from organizations, and set objectives and metrics for implementing joint projects and activities. The thirteenth General Cooperation Meeting took place in May at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

The United Nations and OIC share common objectives in promoting and facilitating the Middle East peace process and the question of Palestine. The Extraordinary OIC Summit on Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif held in Jakarta adopted a resolution entitled "United for a Just Solution", which reaffirmed the positions of Member States, as well as the Jakarta declaration to pursue concrete steps in support of Palestine and the protection of holy sites in East Jerusalem. In addition, at the latest Security Council open debate on the Middle East (see S/PV.7792), OIC reiterated the need to preserve the two-State solution and for the Council to act on the settlement.

On Yemen, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Kingdom Department for International Development and OIC co-chaired a high-level event on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The meeting generated more than $100 million in additional funding for the 2016 Yemen humanitarian response plan.

The United Nations appreciates OIC support for a peace process in Afghanistan, the realization of which is crucial to the long-term growth and stability of the country. Despite some delays, the planned international OIC Ulema Conference on Afghanistan is a positive step towards constructive dialogue aimed at strengthening the foundations of peace and national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

In the Sudan, the partnership between the United Nations and OIC remains an indispensable part of the

collective efforts of the international community to bring peace, security and development to the country. In Darfur, the core of the partnership has been OIC support, under the leadership of Qatar, for the signing and the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. We need to continue this level of engagement to achieve an all-inclusive peace process that addresses the root causes of the conflict and ensures durable solutions.

In Somalia, the United Nations and OIC maintain a critical partnership in State-building and in promoting comprehensive peace and security. The challenge now is for the international community to harmonize its support to achieve comprehensive progress towards common objectives that include coordinated support to the security sector, preventing violent extremism, community recovery, and the extension of basic services at the local level.

In Mali, OIC was a member of the international mediation team during the 2014-2015 inter-Malian dialogue, and remains a committed member of the Agreement Monitoring Committee to this day. During the electoral process in the Central African Republic at the end of 2015, OIC played an instrumental role in defusing tensions among rival political parties in the country. In agreement with Chad, OIC successfully called on the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique to cease hostilities in the Central African Republic and allow the elections to take place in areas that were under its influence.

The United Nations appreciates OIC support for the political dialogue process in Libya. We would welcome a greater role of OIC in supporting the United Nations mediation efforts in the country and in encouraging OIC member States to use their leverage with Libyan parties to make the compromise needed to fully implement the Libyan Political Agreement.

OIC has played a key role in Sierra Leone's recovery efforts since the civil war there, and more recently in the aftermath of the Ebola outbreak. It is worth mentioning that the last meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Sierra Leone, which was held in New York at the ministerial level on 19 September, focused, inter alia, on progress made in the Ebola recovery. I would also like to note the continued importance of the still-active OIC Trust Fund for Sierra Leone, which was established in 2002 to assist the process of reconciliation and rehabilitation. The United Nations is thankful to OIC members for their ongoing economic cooperation with Sierra Leone, particularly in the areas of agriculture, natural resources and energy.

The United Nations continues to collaborate and strengthen its electoral engagement with OIC. That involves the training of electoral staff and observers and support towards the establishment of the database and institutional memory of the organization. In addition, the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations Development Programme provides technical electoral assistance to a number of OIC member States.

Let us use this valuable Security Council meeting to reaffirm and deepen our common commitment to promoting peace and respect for human rights and to offer a better opportunity for all peoples of those regions and the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Jenča for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Diagne.

Mr. Diagne (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to say what an immense honour it is for me to be able to address the Council in a meeting dedicated to a topic of such importance. For that honour, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having once again expressed your confidence in me.

I would also like to clarify that my contribution to this meeting is from an academic perspective. I am a philosopher who has long been engaged in the study, among other things, of the intellectual and spiritual traditions of Islam. Islamic philosophy is one of my specialities. I say this by way of an apology in advance, as I may not speak the language of international institutions, but I hope Council members will forgive me for that.

I would like to highlight the phrase "intellectual and spiritual traditions of Islam" that I used earlier. I think that such language needs to be underscored, because in the sound and fury of the violence being perpetrated today in the name of religion, we may lose sight of the fact that these religions have long and deep-rooted traditions that ultimately express humankind's aspiration to achieving its full potential. I believe that is a point we need to insist upon.

In my capacity as a philosopher and an academic, I would therefore like to share some of my own thoughts, which are focused on the third question in the concept

note before us (S/2016/965, annex), concerning the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. The other reason for this choose, beyond my interest in it as a philosopher, is that such promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue is and always has been a major policy direction of my country, Senegal.

The question raised by this issue, I believe, is twofold. Its first aspect is what needs to be promoted within and interfaith and intercultural dialogue. The second aspect, is how can that be done?

On the first, it is not merely an abstract exercise of comparative religions, whatever the philosophical interest of such a dialogue might be. It will be agreed that such a dialogue must be focused on the universal affirmation of values that enable coexistence on our shared planet, which is now more united than ever before in the history of humankind. Respect for universal human rights — and these human rights are universal because they can be translated into all languages, in all cultures and all spiritual and philosophical traditions — is certainly one of those values to be promoted in the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). I would like to further underscore two values that I think need to serve as the cornerstone of this will to live together.

The first is pluralism. I stress that notion because it seems to me that pluralism is the authentic response to extremist violence, to all forms of violence based on tribalism and all murderous identities, which, unfortunately, we are seeing propagate and spread everywhere in our world. The second great value on which this cooperation should be based is what I will call ecological awareness.

It seems to me that fruitful cooperation between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations must seek to promote pluralism. That requires all spiritual traditions, including Islam, to be aware of their capacity to be open to differences and to oppose exclusivism. Let there be several sects, let there be many interpretations. That is not a problem. The problem arises when one interpretation declares itself to be exclusive, when a sect declares itself to be the only way. That is where the promotion of pluralism is important.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations share a belief in the ongoing mission of advocating the unity of a human community in respect for diversity, which is one of its constituent features. Pluralism is evoked in the sacred text of Muslims when it says that, rather making of humankind a single and homogeneous community, God has confronted people with the tests of difference by enjoining people to respond with competition in good works, because, ultimately, says the text, only God knows what he wants to see in the nature of our variety.

It seems to me that this states clearly that plurality, differences, are natural things, that differences are in the natural order of things and that it is right and proper that it is so. In addition to the reference in the texts, a rich intellectual and spiritual tradition supports what I have just said, in the sense of promoting pluralism. It is pressing that in the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, promotion of pluralism should be at the very heart of dialogue and exchanges.

I also think that interreligious and intercultural dialogue organized in cooperation between the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations must focus on — and here I move to the second value that I mentioned — the promotion of what I call ecological awareness. That is an urgent and pressing need in our times, when the concept of climate change has become tangibly clear, in spite of all the denials that we can unfortunately hear here and there.

The reason why I refer to the value of ecological awareness is because religions have a natural role to play in this task. It will be for the cooperation between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations to show that this is the case for Islam. The reason for bringing this up in a conversation on, especially, the fight against extremism and violence is because it is necessary to draw attention to the nameless violence that is carried out against our common human security, and that is ecological violence. This is underscored because of the significance of that central notion in Islam, that the human is the Lieutenant of God on Earth. In a word, he is the Caliph. Now this lieutenancy, this Caliphate, confers on the human the responsibility to care for the integrity of creation and its ongoing renewal.

To quickly evoke Islam's philosophic tradition on that point, I recall one element of the Islamic intellectual philosophical tradition, a philosophical novel of a twelfth century Andalusian author, Abou Bakr Ibnou Tufail, who wrote a philosophical novel, entitled "Hayy Ibn Yaqzan". It is a proper name. One

of the many lessons that can be drawn from this novel is that for the individual, achieving full awareness of what he or she is, what he or she can become, and what is his or her duty towards the Creator — that is to reach an understanding of the responsibility to protect the environment and all beings with which we share our Earth.

That is why I evoked the second value as being at least as important as that of pluralism in building cooperation that will truly promote human security.

In conclusion, I direct attention to one word — "how", which is one of the questions I had asked. The answer to the "how" is single word — education. For human security there are immediate measures that must be taken to respond to violence. This point was underscored by the Assistant Secretary General of the OIC. But the true, lasting response is education. The preamble to the UNESCO Constitution reminds us that acts of violence begin in the minds of men, and therefore it is in the minds of men that barriers to extremism must be built. That is why it is vital that cooperation between the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations should be firmly founded on education. They must pursue joint efforts to develop together education in pluralism and education in ecological awareness, the two values on which I focused my statement.

Once again, I thank you, Mr. President, for your trust, and I also thank the Council members for their attention.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall begin by stating the obvious: the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a fundamental actor for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is a fundamental actor in the relations of the Security Council with other organizations. I also underscore that the role of the OIC arises from the fact that societies with Muslim majorities are those that are paying a very high price for terrorism — which, I stress, has no roots, no justification of a religious nature. I say that again and again. Therefore the Organization of Islamic Cooperation can play — and does play — a fundamental role in all those Islamic societies that are threatened.

We engaged in some reflection in preparation for today's discussion, and we have identified four important areas in which I think it is possible to forge better connectivity between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations in general.

First is the area of preventive action. Then, in a very simple and straightforward analysis, I will look at how we can cooperate better in the short, medium, and long terms. If Council members will indulge, I will provide a brief summary of my written statement on what we think can be done in the area of preventive diplomacy.

The first measure under preventive diplomacy that we have identified is the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674). In that regard, the role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is fundamental. While there is an array of measures that can be developed, I shall highlight only one. I believe that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation could contribute to a broader dissemination of the ideas and spirit of the Plan of Action throughout the societies of its member States. In the area of preventative diplomacy, I would like to underscore women. In general, they play a key role in preventing violent extremism. As we are all aware, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UN-Women are already working jointly on a number of interesting initiatives in that regard. And, with regard to preventive diplomacy, we in Spain have worked with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in particular in the context of a seminar we hosted in Alicante, where together we came up with a set of ideas on mediation that, frankly, are very interesting.

Secondly, with regard to how we can work better in the short-term, I would mention Spain's proposal to establish a task force of religious leaders for crisis situations, which would be under the aegis of the Secretary-General. As Spain proposed, the task force would be a rapid-reaction force that would be deployed immediately in reaction to any emerging crisis involving interreligious issues or violent extremism. Also in the short-term, I believe we must accord a louder and more powerful voice to the victims of terrorism. Spain did that here through an Arria Formula meeting during which, for the first time, victims of terrorism in Spain participated. I believe that victims of terrorism — and I am sorry to say it, for they are victims — can be key allies in combating violent extremism. Lastly in terms of short-term action, we believe that we must continue to make an effort to provide a counternarrative to

terrorists' narratives, as Mr. Diagne stated in his briefing. In that regard, as one of the co-sponsors of the Alliance of Civilizations, Spain has proposed the idea of establishing a supra-national, public/ private committee on tolerance that would contribute to the dissemination of positive messages and the development of a counternarrative to debunk extremist narratives on the Internet and social networks.

Turning to the medium-term, we have proposed the deployment of experts ion interreligious and intercultural areas as part of peacekeeping operations. For a deep-rooted understanding of cultural and religious sensitivities is vital if our peacekeeping operations are to be more effective. We are also promoting the establishment of platforms for peace for religious leaders in areas of conflict, such as Syria, Iraq, Israel and Palestine, among others.

With regard to long-term efforts, what do I intend by that term? The answer is simple. I believe that the long-term involves youth. Only 20 per cent of young people claim that religious reasons are behind their radicalization and recruitment by armed or terrorist groups. "Long-term" means talking to and about the 1.8 billion young people throughout the world. It means taking every possible precaution to ensure that they have a proper education, which is a necessary, but not exclusive, condition to prevent them from being attracted to extremist and violent ideologies.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the work carried out by Egypt's Al-Azhar University, which has set up a centre to analyse all the decrees and identify those that could most likely to attract young people into joining or participating in extremist groups.

I have greatly shortened my statement so as to make the best use of time. Those who wish to can read the entire text, which will be made available on the webiste of the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): First of all, I would like to thank today's briefers for their contributions to our debate. I am also grateful to you, Mr. President, for focusing our deliberations on this particular subject. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is active in various fields, and today we are discussing cooperation between our two organizations in countering extremist ideology, which has become a topical issue for Member States of both our organizations.

Preventing violent extremism has become one of the most pressing priorities for the international community. This evil and its gravest form — terrorism — threaten our core values and principles, including democracy, human rights, the rule of law, equal opportunities and freedom. The threat now has a global character, and therefore requires the full consolidation of the efforts of all international actors and the utilization of their comparative advantages. Therefore, cooperation between the United Nations and OIC in countering terrorist and violent extremist ideologies advocated by such terrorist entities as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and their affiliates has never been more important.

Why is that so important? It is because terrorism does not begin with guns and bombs, but words. Those who want to plant hatred and intolerance in people's minds should be stopped before the seeds of evil sprout and their disciples turn into merciless tools for killing. Our efforts should not be limited to a media-driven campaign. What we need is a comprehensive approach with long-term actions to address violent extremism and its root causes, based on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Such a strategy should involve not only countering extremist ideology disseminated through the media and the Internet, but also developing persuasive context-specific counternarratives and messages to neutralize terrorists' influence on persons belonging to the target audience, while eliminating terrorist focal points of radicalization. While addressing the need to intensify our common work on preventing the spread of malevolent ideologies, we should explore ways to engage young people, who are the most vulnerable to violent extremist narratives.

The United Nations and OIC can benefit from developing joint projects aimed at strengthening our collective capacity to effectively respond to the spread of such phenomena. The focus should be placed on several priority areas.

First, we should focus on consolidating international political will and expertise to reveal drivers of violent extremism, including gross human rights violations, corrupt institutions and poor governance, as emphasized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Secondly, in order to reduce the appeal of and support for terrorist groups, our joint efforts should

combine counter and prevention measures that address shortcomings in governance and promote social development, dialogue, respect for the rule of law and human rights.

Thirdly, the United Nations and OIC can jointly foster a global dialogue for the promotion of tolerance and peace, as well as for a better understanding across societies and cultures, including in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Fourthly, relevant international assistance should be provided to Members States in adopting more effective policies and approaches to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremist ideology, inter alia, by developing robust national counter-narrative campaigns.

Finally, a more active role should be given to empowering locally credible voices that can help prevent and reverse the spread of violent extremist ideology among the population. That is where OIC's expertise in engaging civil society, and in particular representatives of local communities and religious leaders, as well as women and youth, could play crucial role. That relates in particular to raising public awareness by revealing the truth about would-be jihadis in order to delegitimize their activities, thereby enhancing resistance against them. The victims of terrorism should also play an important role in that kind of comprehensive preventive campaign. The achievement of those objectives will require the consolidation of all existing efforts and strengthening cooperation among all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society and the private sector. Ukraine is fully committed to this joint endeavor and is ready to contribute its share, including through the observer status that we hope OIC will grant us.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank the Senegalese delegation for convening this important debate. I join others in thanking the briefers. I warmly congratulate Mr. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen on his election as Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The United Kingdom looks forward to working with him and with OIC.

As the representative body of 57 Muslim-majority States, OIC speaks with a unique authority on the issues facing the Islamic world, so I am glad that OIC's voice is being heard in the Chamber today. One such issue facing OIC's members — indeed, all Members of the United Nations — is the growing threat of extremist ideologies and violent extremism. Sadly, as we in the Council know only too well, that threat affects Muslim-majority States in a truly disproportionate way, including Iraq, Syria, Libya and many other places. Put simply and starkly, far more Muslim men, women and children have lost their lives at the hands of groups like Al-Shabaab and Da'esh than people of any other faith or religion. The fact that those evil groups claim to represent Islam only makes that reality even more sickening. The United Kingdom is clear that we must tackle violent extremism in all its forms, whether it be radical Islam or neo-Nazism. OIC States are key partners in that fight, and I want to set out today three ways in which our cooperation can help counter those ideologies.

First, it is no coincidence that 18 members of OIC are also members of the Global Coalition Against Da'esh. Among them are our colleagues from Egypt. I want to pay tribute to the work of those two great Egyptian institutions, Al-Azhar and Dar Al-Ifta. Those beacons of Islamic thinking help provide a narrative of tolerance that counters the hate preached by the likes of Da'esh. The United Kingdom is committed to helping spread that narrative and showing the reality of the lies of Da'esh. That is why we are hosting the Coalition's Strategic Communication Cell in London. It draws on the expertise of Coalition members, including our partners from the United Arab Emirates, to help counter the misrepresentation of Islam and its values by Da'esh.

Countering the ideology is partly about offering a competing narrative, but it is also about delivering consequences to those who join Da'esh and supporting survivors of their crimes by giving them a voice and ending impunity. That is why the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom launched a campaign to bring Da'esh to justice, with the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Belgium on 13 September, the opening date of the new session of the General Assembly. Holding Da'esh accountable is a top priority for the United Kingdom and we are seeking United Nations action to preserve evidence of the crimes of Da'esh as a first step to that end.

My second point is that OIC States have a valuable role to play in building an even stronger consensus around the work of the United Nations to prevent violent extremism. Together, we can make the United Nations system better at understanding and tackling the root causes of terrorism, including by addressing violent extremism narratives. The United Nations is stepping

up in that regard. Last June, the General Assembly directed the United Nations system to implement the relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and encouraged States to do the same. We all now need to work to turn those concepts into action. That means mobilizing the correct resources and expertise in order to enable United Nations entities to devise a strategic approach. It also means Member States developing national action plans on preventing violent extremism and helping other Member States do the same.

Thirdly and finally, we need to recognize that countering extremist ideologies is not always about the United Nations or about fighting Da'esh. Sometimes it is about working together to create opportunities that provide an alternative to false ideologies. For example, the Islamic Development Bank serves the economic development needs of the 57 OIC countries, with annual commitments totaling well over $10 billion. All OIC States can use those funds to finance projects that help improve the lives of people living in OIC States. The United Kingdom is proud to be helping that effort. Our collaboration can be seen in the $25-million Arab Women's Enterprise Fund, which will create more jobs for women. It is also seen in the $9 billion that the Bank committed at the London Conference on Syria.

In closing, we look forward to our collaboration with OIC strengthening further. Whether it be through the United Nations, the Coalition against Da'esh or the Islamic Development Bank, it is clear that OIC has a vital role to play in countering the dangerous ideologies that threaten international peace and security.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We would like to start by thanking the Senegalese delegation for convening this meeting. We are equally grateful to the briefers for their insightful presentations.

Considering the importance that we place on strengthening United Nations cooperation with regional, subregional and intergovernmental organizations in order to more effectively address current conflicts and humanitarian crises, we welcome this timely gathering, which we hope will contribute to improving cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

As the OIC Assistant Secretary General highlighted in his statement, the goals and objectives of OIC and the United Nations are broadly similar. Both organizations are devoted to the cause of international peace, security and development and share common challenges in all domains of human endeavours. The interactions between the United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies with OIC, as portrayed by the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Miroslav Jenča, reveal great potential for development. We think further efforts should be undertaken in order to strengthen those interactions.

Unfortunately, in the past decade we have witnessed the exponential rise of terrorist attacks around the world, which have been perpetrated by a growing number of violent extremist groups that advocate a brand of radical extremism that, contrary to their claims, has nothing to do with Islam, which is a religion that preaches peace and understanding among humankind. As a fundamental part of the efforts to reverse that trend, it is vital first and foremost to end the conflicts in Palestine, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen and elsewhere, which are examples of how foreign interference, oppressive Governments and disenfranchised segments of the population strengthen groups like Da'esh, Al-Qaeda and others, which are at the forefront of international radical extremism.

In order to effectively fight and defeat terrorism and its radical extremist ideology, political processes must be based on inclusivity, including with respect to ethnic and religious groups. In the aforementioned conflicts, one of the main sources of discontent and infighting has been the disenfranchisement of certain social or religious groups, which has created a space and platform for radicalism and extremism. In that regard, we praise the work of OIC in delegitimizing terrorist ideologies by developing counter-narratives to extremist ideologies and propaganda by elevating religious voices that support tolerance and non-violence.

The Republic of Angola, which is constitutionally consecrated as a secular State, separates church and State while also recognizing and respecting different religious values, protecting all creeds and places of worship as long as they act in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic. Currently, we are witnessing in certain quarters a tendency to politicize religion and use it to justify war and subjugation. As such, we strongly encourage OIC and other organizations to focus more attention on developing strategies to undo this dangerous intertwining of religion and politics, play a more decisive role in countering the deep fracture that the Islamic world is now experiencing, in particular between Sunnis and Shi'as, and protecting religious

minorities. Given multicultural and multiconfessional composition of many Muslim countries, it is crucial to promote interfaith dialogue, tolerance and pluralism, allow all segments of society to practice their faith as they wish, and avoid the use of religious ideas as a tool for power struggles.

In conclusion, we would like to commend OIC and the League of Arab States for their efforts aimed at implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and at mediating ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. We believe that due to ethnic and religious differences, as well as regional power struggles, OIC and the League of Arab States must seek to address the root causes of discontent and curb radical and extremist groups such as Da'esh from spreading hatred, fear and destruction. We further encourage OIC to continue working with the United Nations in addressing the factors that lead to radical extremism and the spread of terrorism in the Islamic world and beyond.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the initiative of the Senegalese presidency to convene today's meeting. China attentively listened to the statements of Assistant Secretary-General Jenča; the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mr. Opeloyeru; and professor Diagne of Columbia University.

OIC is a major organization of Islamic States designed to promote unity, cooperation and self-improvement. By making use of its religious, historical and cultural advantages, it has played a positive role in promoting the settlement of regional hotspot issues and in facilitating post-conflict reconstruction. Since it attained United Nations observer status, OIC has strengthened cooperation with the United Nations in such areas as dispute prevention and mediation, intercultural dialogue and humanitarian assistance. It has also actively pushed for political settlements in Somalia, Afghanistan, Mali, Libya and the Central African Republic, which has earned it international recognition and appreciation.

China supports the strengthening of cooperation between OIC and the United Nations, consolidating collective security mechanisms in a joint effort to maintain international peace and security. Terrorism is posing a grave threat to international peace and security and is therefore a common challenge for all of humankind. Terrorists and extremist forces propagate terrorist ideology and violent extremism. In certain countries, some people, especially young people, have been hoodwinked into violent extremist and terrorist activities, causing serious harm.

Counter-terrorism is an important area where the United Nations and OIC have conducted significant cooperation. China supports the United Nations and the Security Council in pushing forward their cooperation with OIC in fighting terrorist ideology. Accordingly, China would now like to offer the following comments.

First, we must stick to a unified criteria and forge a sophisticated counter-terrorism network. Acts of terrorism — whenever, wherever, by whomever committed and in whatever forms and manifestations they arise — need to be fought resolutely. Counter-terrorism should not be linked to any specific nationality or religion. The United Nations and the Security Council need to play a leading and coordinating role in international counter-terrorism cooperation. Parties need to implement relevant Security Council resolutions in a comprehensive manner, strengthen exchange of information, border-control and law-enforcement cooperation, combat cross-border training by terrorist organizations, and cut off the transborder flow of terrorists, all of which will serve to put strong international pressure on terrorists.

Secondly, we must give priority to cyber counter-terrorism and cut off the channels for spreading terrorist ideology. The Internet and social media and other high-tech applications have become major platforms for terrorists to spread their ideology and violent extremist ideas. The international community should adopt vigorous measures to strengthen the monitoring of the Internet and crack down on terrorist organizations that are using the Internet to publish incendiary violent videos to spread terrorist ideologies and extremist ideas, recruit operatives, raise funds and plan or implement acts of terrorism.

Thirdly, dialogue among different civilizations to achieve peaceful coexistence and harmony needs to be supported. Dialogue and exchanges are effective tools for enhancing mutual understanding among different civilizations, different religions and different cultures and facilitating inclusion. The international community needs to vigorously promote mutual respect, openness and inclusiveness in a spirit of civilized dialogue and facilitate mutual learning about the diversity of

civilizations, in order to foster a social atmosphere where different nationalities, cultures and religions can treat each other as equals and coexist in harmony and promote civil exchanges aimed at peace while respecting differences and achieving harmony through openness and inclusiveness.

China enjoys deep, friendly and cooperative relations with Islamic States. China attaches great importance to the unique role of OIC, appreciates the significant contribution OIC has made in promoting cooperation among Islamic States, supports OIC in its ongoing efforts to maintain international peace and security and regional peace and security, engage in counter-terrorism and promote common development.

Over the past four decades, China has conducted friendly exchanges with Islamic States and identified the ways for different civilizations, religions and social systems to live together. China is ready to deepen integration of interests under the framework of the One Belt, One Road initiative, strengthen ties, expand dialogue between the Chinese civilization and the Islamic civilization and commit iteself to forging a new type of international relations predicated upon win-win cooperation, all with a view to building a shared community of destiny and creating a safer and better future for humankind.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting, and Mr. Hameed Opeloyeru, Mr. Miroslav Jenča and Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne, for their valuable briefings.

For Venezuela, it is of extreme importance to recognize the role played by regional and subregional organization in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, conflict prevention and the establishment of coordinated strategies for the maintenance and building of peace. We believe that, in these regional and subregional forums, the Security Council has important allies in meeting all the challenges to peace and security around the world.

The United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have maintained close cooperation over the last 40 years, particularly in the areas of peace and security, humanitarian assistance to refugees and the promotion of dialogue among civilizations. The strategic cooperation that has contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the foundational charters of both multilateral institutions has undoubtedly been mutually beneficial, in the light of their shared vision, interests and objectives. In that regard, we would note that OIC is a strategic ally of the United Nations, particularly in the fight against terrorism and the spread of violent extremism, including terrorism ideologies and narratives, as the organization regards that scourge as one of the greatest threats to international security in the world today.

In that connection, we once again emphatically condemn all terrorist acts in all of its forms and manifestations, whatever their motivation, wherever they occur, and whosoever commits them. We also affirm that terrorism must not be linked to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

Venezuela believes that effectively combatting terrorism and violent extremism requires the joint, resolute and coordinated efforts of the international community and the full, non-selective implementation of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions prohibiting, inter alia, financing, training, harbouring or transferring weapons to terrorist groups. That battle should be waged in the framework of international cooperation under applicable existing international and regional instruments, including the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nation and international law, in full respect for human rights, fundamental liberties and the rule of law.

In that regard, we believe that a preventive approach is always the most appropriate way to combat the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism in a comprehensive manner. We must neutralize the strategies of extremist groups and ideologies that have taken it upon themselves to promote violence and intolerance. We once again highlight the importance of adopting and implementing coordinated initiatives — adapted to each situation and national reality — in order to address the root causes that fuel this despicable phenomenon, to develop effective and innovative strategies to counter extremist and terrorist narratives and to encourage critical thinking within the society with a view to preventing radicalization, recruitment and the mobilization of resources, including the inappropriate use of information and communication technologies.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has clearly shown that it is committed and attaches great importance to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, as a great many of its member States have been victims of terrorist attacks. In that regard, we

call for action, including the adoption of a convention on that issue. Recently, our country, in our capacity of president of Non-Aligned Movement countries, participated in OIC's forty-third session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held October in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. We witnessed the launching of an OIC message centre and the Centre for Dialogue, Peace and Understanding. We are sure they will contribute to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, including radicalization and incitement, particularly online and in social networks.

Such initiatives, which seek to promote respect for religious, social and cultural diversity, as well as for a culture of peace, tolerance and respect among different nations and societies, complement the efforts of the United Nations to combat terrorism and violent extremism and contribute to using good practices and past successes in drafting a broad international framework to effectively combat terrorist narratives and developing a strategy that counters the propaganda used to encourage, motivate and recruit others to commit terrorist acts, including through distorting religion to justify violence. That proposal will be reviewed by the Council in April 2017.

In conclusion, Venezuela believes that we should continue to strengthen cooperation and strategic alliances between OIC and the United Nations, particularly through bodies such as the Counter-Terrorism Task Force and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. In our view, that is the most effective way to face common challenges and to jointly and collaboratively address the spread of terrorism, violent extremism, the migrant problem and transnational organized crime, and reach peaceful settlements to conflicts, particularly in those areas where OIC has a competitive advantage — its relationship with the Islamic world.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank the delegation of Senegal for convening this important briefing on the issue of improving the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for confronting the violent extremist ideologies leading to terrorism. I should like to thank all of the briefers for their valuable contributions.

Egypt believes that the international community, represented by the United Nations, should have a comprehensive, coordinated and practical strategy to confront the ideology of terrorism — one that relies fundamentally on a partnership with States, regional organizations and, indeed, the actual efforts at that level, in an international legal framework that takes into consideration the fact that confronting the ideologies of terrorism is a very long-term endeavour. The efforts of Islamic States are at the forefront of combatting terrorism. Many of those States have taken many steps through OIC. By way of example, rather than as an exhaustive list, the 1999 Convention on Combatting International Terrorism has been signed by the membership of the organization; a number of very important documents and resolutions on countering terrorism and extremism that leads to terrorism have been adopted; OIC has adopted an Action Plan for 2025 containing priorities that include combatting terrorism and extremism, and their use of social media and the media, in general; and OIC has established the Centre for Dialogue, Peace and Understanding, which uses the Internet and social networks to combat the messages of extremism leading to terrorism.

As everyone knows, strengthening the strategic partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and OIC is necessary, indeed ineluctable, particularly given that OIC is the second largest international organization after the United Nations. Its membership comprises 57 States, spread over four continents. It is an organization with a great deal of experience over many years of fighting terrorism and its consequences, and thus, it is best equipped to combat its ideology.

In that context, we should like to stress the following points, which we believe are necessary to promoting the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in confronting extremist ideologies leading to terrorism. First of all and, most importantly, cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and OIC must be promoted and more effective, and current links between United Nations bodies pertaining to counter-terrorism must be elevated to the highest possible level.

Secondly, there must be a comprehensive strategy for confronting terrorist ideologies. Let me stress in this regard the need to involve OIC in the drafting and implementation of the comprehensive international framework for confronting the messages of terrorist groups, which was called for in S/PRST/2016/6.

Thirdly, institutional cooperation among the bodies of the United Nations and OIC — in particular the

OIC secretariat and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre — is important in order to set priorities for identifying challenges and finding the best means to cooperate and confront terrorist ideologies, including by providing technical assistance to Islamic States and strengthening their capacities in this regard. Those States must be made more capable of completely and effectively implementing relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as those of OIC.

Fourthly, this cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and OIC must be promoted in confronting all types of violent extremism leading to terrorism, in particular Islamophobia and other political, economic and social factors that lead to terrorism, including foreign occupation.

Fifthly, it is necessary to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in order to put an end to any incitement to terrorism. Confronting the narrative of terrorist groups, in particular on social media and the Internet, all while respecting international law and the principle of freedom of expression, human rights and considering the possibility of launching a joint campaign to confront all the erroneous messages used by terrorist organizations to promote themselves for recruitment purposes, while using religious symbols and personalities that enjoy society's trust.

Sixthly and finally, the two organizations must have an exchange of views to increase and diversify their sources of financing and to implement their various projects and programmes to confront terrorist ideologies.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank and commend Senegal for having taken the initiative to facilitate this briefing on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), focused on the area of countering extremist ideologies. We are also very grateful to you, Mr. President, for your concept note (S/2016/965, annex). We also thank Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Miroslav Jenča; Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Mr. Hameed Opeloyeru; and Columbia University Professor, Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne, for their presentations.

My own statement will primarily build upon the reflections shared with us by Professor Souleymane Bachir Diagne. I would like to particularly latch onto the emphasis he lent to the issues of pluralism, diversity and the role of education. We cherish the deeply held belief that extremist ideologies are combatted with freedom and tolerance. I hail from a country where people are born and live free and where the freedom of the individual is the cornerstone of society. We, men and women, are free to choose in absolute conditions of equality with no restrictions placed upon us. We, men and women, choose our lifestyles and our education. We elect our Governments, which enjoy legitimacy purely through the exercise of the free voting of the citizens. We choose our religions or we choose to not to have a religion. In that regard, the Constitution of Uruguay, in article 5, provides that all religious beliefs in Uruguay are to be freely enjoyed. The State does not support any religion. The places of worship of the various religions are free of taxes. That is why in my country one often finds churches, mosques, synagogues and syncretistic temples next to each other. People are free to choose their place of worship and does not require Government permission. Religious practice is the personal choice of an individual and the State does not and cannot meddle in any way.

Even in this environment of religious tolerance, we run the risk of intolerance rearing its ugly head. In preventing such an outcome, education, in which boys and girls, men and women, have equal access, plays a crucial role. Education is vital in order to foster an understanding of pluralism, diversity and tolerance. The defence against extremist ideologies begins within our individual societies by combating intolerance and promoting freedom. There can be no doubt that at the international level, the cooperation between States and institutions also has a key role to play in the broader fight against terrorism in this era of complete globalization.

As part of this cooperation, coordinating the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is of vital importance. We welcome with great satisfaction the fact that in the final communication of the thirteenth OIC summit, which was held in Istanbul on 14 and 15 April, OIC hailed its own growing cooperation with various international and regional organizations, including, inter alia, the United Nations. On that occasion, OIC also reiterated its full support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and for the Secretary-General's

Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which we see as a very positive sign.

By the same token, the determination of its members to remain united in the fight against terrorism and the reaffirmation of the importance of addressing the causes of violent extremism in holistic way are evidence of a joint and comprehensive work, which we commend, and we encourage the protagonists to maintain a steady course along these lines. The battle of ideas must be won by underscoring the values of peaceful coexistence, pluralism, social inclusion and freedom of opinion.

Ms. Sison (United States): I thank Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Miroslav Jenča; Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mr. Hameed Opeloyeru; and Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne for joining us.

Our discussion today is a timely one. Over the past two years, States Members of the United Nations have shown an unprecedented willingness to collaborate on preventing violent extremism. In December 2014, resolution 2178 (2014) called on States to engage local communities and non-governmental actors to counter violent extremism. That was a major step forward. For the first time, the need to counter violent extremism was recognized in a Security Council resolution and an essential element of the solution was identified. Then, in January of this year, the Secretary-General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to the General Assembly, which included wise recommendations well worth implementing, such as the call for the development of national and regional action plans to prevent violent extremism. This past July, in its fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly urged States to unite against violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism.

The United States welcomes the steps taken by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to partner with the United Nations on that agenda, together with other organizations. We are appreciative of OIC's support of statements on 16 January and 8 April for the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. I would highlight in particular the fruitfulness of the cooperation between OIC and the Global Counter-Terrorism forum in bringing together a diverse group of religious scholars, academics, Government officials and experts in the field of education and preventing violent extremism to discuss best practices and the role of religious education in promoting peace. So how can we build on that recent work by the United Nations and OIC to create an even stronger strategic partnership?

One way would be to create a high-level coordinator for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Such a coordinator would improve communication between the United Nations and OIC on counter-terrorism issues, speaking authoritatively from the United Nations side with a single voice on behalf of the multitude of United Nations entities engaged in countering violent extremism. The coordinator could be a more effective liaison between the United Nations and OIC than is possible under the current framework, which could benefit both organizations. In addition, the coordinator could harness the potential of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to provide technical and other assistance to Member States and international organizations. Accordingly, we urge all States, in particular OIC members, to express support for such a coordinator to the incoming Secretary-General and his transition team. There is no single step that would do more to strengthen the strategic partnership between the United Nations and OIC.

A second way to enhance the strategic partnership is to recommit ourselves to upholding human rights in all of our activities to counter violent extremism. It is easy for all of us to say that we respect and promote human rights in our countering violent extremism efforts but what matters is whether we actually protect such rights in practice: the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly. It is vital for the United Nations and OIC to enshrine human rights in their countering violent extremism strategies and act when States fail to do so.

Of course, such rights are intrinsically important because our people — all people — are entitled to them. But such rights are also practically important, indeed essential, to successfully counter violent extremism. Voices from outside Governments, civil society, community activists, youth leaders, often have more credibility with their peers, fellow citizens, than we as Government officials do on that topic. Generally speaking, they are better advocates for moderation, understanding and peace than we are. We need to ensure that such voices have the freedom, space and confidence to speak.

Thirdly, we must rededicate ourselves to working to counter intolerance and discrimination against any religious group, including Muslims, in each of our countries. Here at the United Nations, we all often emphasize and re-emphasize that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion or nationality but we are not the audience we need to convince. We must continue to do all that we can to convey that message within our own societies. In the 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, President Obama noted that inexcusable acts of violence have been committed in the United States and around the world by people of different faiths and that it is not unique to any one group, geography or period of time. That principle is a fundamental part of the United States national strategy to counter violent extremism. We must not lose the momentum we have built here at the United Nations in partnership with OIC and other groups and in our own States and societies in countering violent extremism.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the delegation of Senegal for convening today's very important meeting. Russia strongly advocates building and deepening cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

OIC members are countries whose people profess common spiritual and moral values. Such a uniting factor should play a fundamentally important role in resolving the many complex tasks the international community faces. First and foremost are conflict prevention, mediation and political diplomatic settlement, where the Organization's potential is absolutely needed. Today, the Islamic and Arab worlds are traversing a period of major upheaval, often accompanied by bloody conflict. Helping the people of the region emerge from this dark period is not only the responsibility of the Security Council but a general duty in which OIC, along with other regional and subregional organizations, is called upon to play a unique role. Our common goal, both in the Council and in OIC, should be to pool our efforts to counteract terrorism. In his statement at the seventieth anniversary session of the General Assembly, the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Putin, called for establishing a broad counter-terrorism coalition (see A/70/PV.13). It is an urgent task to be addressed.

We are convinced that violence cannot be justified by any religious pretext and that the actions of terrorists, wherever or by whomever, should be condemned. Any form of support for terrorist activity should be strongly counteracted. We should not try to distinguish between good terrorists and bad terrorists — between one country's terrorists and another country's terrorists. The growing threat from extremist and terrorist groups like the Islamic State poses a direct challenge to the entire international community, above all our partners in OIC.

Recently, the counter-terrorism context has changed considerably. On one hand, there is continued growth in the global terrorist threat. Therefore, now more than ever, we need to clearly and unambiguously define this threat in important United Nations documents, such as Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. On the other hand, the term "violent extremism" — which we see as an integral focus of international counter-terrorist cooperation — has been introduced. It is part of the counter-terrorism prevention efforts — that is, the prevention radical and terrorist phenomena. Misconception is unacceptable, as we could end up disorienting the international community and steering it away from its main task of eliminating terrorism.

It is now important to recognize the vital role of States and their competent authorities in countering terrorism in their own territories and as part of international cooperation efforts. In that regard, I should remind the Council that we have made important comments regarding the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Removing international terrorism from the international legal framework is unacceptable. That undermines the global counter-terrorism architecture and sometimes leads to interference in States' internal affairs. Russia has submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council on countering terrorist ideology, with the goal of achieving real and effective opposition to the promotion of terrorist ideas, including through the Internet.

The pseudo-ideological content under the cover of Islam spread by terrorists is dangerous for Muslim countries first and foremost. We hope that the Islamic world shares the view of Russia on the urgent need to implement and strengthen the approach of the Security Council, and the United Nations as a whole, to curbing terrorism, the spread of its ideologies and its radicalization of populations, especially young people. We hope that our partners will ponder our proposed draft resolution and adopt Russia's initiative.

Russia supports consolidating international efforts to combat the threat that is common to all of us. We firmly believe that the fight against terrorism and the violent extremism that leads to it should be built on a solid foundation of international law under United Nations auspices. We have been providing constant support to the Governments of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and other countries of the region in their opposition to terrorists. In order to succeed in the fight against terrorism, it is essential that we prioritize attention not only to the military threat posed by jihadist groups, but also to the root causes that have given rise to it. The only way we can deal with the accumulated contradictions is through the united efforts of the entire international community, by deepening our dialogue and our partnerships, while respecting people's right to preserve their cultural, religious and civilizational identity. That requires comprehensive analysis, in which it is essential to consider the interrelationships between all the most acute problems, old and new, afflicting the region. We would like to recall that Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, speaking in a Security Council meeting on the Middle East (see S/PV.7774), called for the convening of a comprehensive review of the situation in the Middle East.

We proceed from the assumption that no conflict, whether in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, the Sahara and Sahel regions or other long-suffering parts of the world, can be resolved through a military solution. Only a broad national dialogue with the participation of every ethnic, religious and political group and their unity in combating terrorism can produce the agreement, stability and conditions that are critical to the successful socioeconomic development of the countries in areas of conflict. We should particularly emphasize that the crises that have flared more recently should not push the task of settling the Palestinian-Israeli conflict into the background. That should be based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and, of course, the concept of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace.

The relationship between Russia and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is built on dialogue and mutual respect. Our country, which is home to more than 20 million Muslim citizens, is an observer in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and committed to the progressive development of cooperation with the Organization's member States with the goal of achieving security and stability in the world.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Malaysia commends Senegal's initiative in convening today's briefing. We would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča, Mr. Hameed Opeleyeru, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Mr. Souleymayne Bachir Diagne of Columbia University for their participation and presentations.

We believe that the initiatives on preventing and countering extremist ideology anchored by both OIC and the United Nations require a streamlined partnership in order to make a more positive and effective contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. In enhancing the strategic partnership between the United Nations and OIC for curbing extremist ideology, it is important to dissociate terrorism from any religion. The advent of Islamophobia has created a convenient false truth supporting terrorists' agendas, enabling a misleading mindset to prevail as people surrender to irrational responses to terrorism and associate terrorism with religion. The international community should therefore address the increase in Islamophobic sentiments that has led to the marginalization and alienation of Muslims and to discrimination against them on the basis of their religion. Muslims should not be victimized twice — first, by terror attacks, and subsequently by the policy responses to such attacks.

The international community's efforts to counter extremist ideology must be founded on internalizing a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding in the psyche of people who are vulnerable to terrorist groups and targeted by them, especially young people. Those efforts require consistent commitment, resolute effort and unwavering focus on our part. Addressing the root causes of terrorism is vital to an effective strategy and central to the OIC's positions on the issue. Those underlying causes may arise from issues such as the protracted illegal occupation of Palestine, non-inclusive governance, dysfunctional institutions and gross violations of human rights, all of which breed anger, frustration and despair and have proved a powerful tool for recruiting foreign terrorist fighters. In order, therefore, in seeking complementarities in the cooperation between the United Nations and OIC on a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, we should consider more policies based on dialogue, socioeconomic inclusion and non-discrimination in

support of minority groups. Malaysia believes that exploring synergies on such policies will bring long-term and sustainable benefits to pluralistic societies.

Both OIC and the United Nations have provided the international community with an exhaustive list of instruments, plans of action and documents as guiding principles for playing an effective role in combating terrorism and countering extremist ideology. We see value in streamlining the shared goals and agendas of OIC and the United Nations in order to address the many dimensions of extremist ideology. The recommendations made, which include technical assistance for capacity-building, developing a regional contact list of focal points and establishing early warning centres for exchanging information on violent extremist activities, could be effective when undertaken within a framework of constructive cooperation with States and international and regional organizations. It would undermine our agenda to belabour the issues and ponder what we should do; rather, we should act now and implement those measures as quickly as possible.

We are also pleased to see the continuing synergy between the United Nations and OIC through the continuing cooperation that has been expressed this year, as evidenced this year in the support shown for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in OIC's communiqué on the 13th Islamic Summit.

Malaysia looks forward to the efforts that have been launched by the OIC General Secretariat to establish a messaging centre aimed at countering terrorist narratives through counter-messaging on social media sites, juxtaposing true interpretations of the Koran and Hadith on ideological subjects and exposing the machinations of the deviant extremist groups that propagate hate, terror and violence. As far as possible, the OIC messaging centre should coordinate its activities and messages with other, similar centres, including the Abu Dhabi-based Sawab Centre and the Kuala Lumpur-based Regional Digital Counter Messaging Centre for Southeast Asia, established in July. It is essential that information and clarification on the core Islamic values of peace, tolerance and moderation, among others, be disseminated to the widest possible audience.

In addition, close cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force would assist in crafting relevant messages on effective counter-terrorism and counter-violent extremism policies and implementation measures for a broader audience. As such, the newly established OIC Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution Unit could also benefit from closer interaction with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs' Mediation Support Unit and the lessons learned from their experiences through ongoing dialogue and exchanges.

Before concluding, Malaysia wishes also to pay tribute to the OIC secretariat and the United Nations for its initiatives to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. As a member of OIC, we reiterate our utmost support to OIC for ensuring the success of those initiatives. We continue to call on the full support of all OIC member States to continue working effectively with the United Nations so as to ensure the success of these initiatives.

Mrs. Gueguen Mohsen (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by thanking our briefers for their enlightening statements. I also thank Senegal for taking the initiative to convene this meeting with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on a matter of such mutual concern — the fight against violent extremism. That is an issue at the crux of our shared concerns and affects all of our societies, irrespective of their cultural identity or geographical location. That being said, we need to understand the issue and react appropriately, as highlighted by our briefers. Cooperation between the United Nations and OIC is important on all fronts but particularly in terms of the need for pluralism and environmental awareness.

I would like to begin with the positive by highlighting the significant successes seen this year in the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria. The Monitoring Team of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida,and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities indicated in a recent report that the total volume of online propaganda spread by the group has decreased. That represents steps forward that deserve to be highlighted.

Nevertheless, reality forces us to acknowledge that ISIL continues to exercise significant appeal over a number of individuals, particularly young people, in many countries — my own country being no exception. More needs to be done to counter that phenomenon.

Terrorist group propaganda, and particularly that of ISIL, seeks to entice future recruits by playing on political, economic and social motivations, as well as psychological ones, which are dangerously powerful. Specialists who have studied the subject have clearly demonstrated that there is no unique profile of a potential recruit nor any simple explanation as to why individuals decide, sometimes incredibly rapidly, to join a terrorist group. The reasons are multiple and complex, combining collective mindsets and individual trajectories, the broad sweep of history, personal experiences and security, geopolitics, justice and mental health issues.

Recruiters attract young people by playing on their feelings of injustice and marginalization. They appeal to their need for money and recognition, promising them an ideal and a cause to defend, when in fact they find nothing but tyranny, brutality and death. They use the fascinating power of images to stun and manipulate their targets' minds and even, if necessary, known brainwashing techniques to lead their subjects to reject their academic, professional and even familial environments. They are particularly effective in two environments: on the Internet and in prisons. Their ideology of chaos is at the heart of terrorist propaganda and has the dual purpose of spreading terror throughout the majority and recruiting new fighters from a restricted minority.

I would now like to turn to a second broad point. Faced with such a large threat, each and every State and regional organization has a role to play to shatter that large-scale recruitment exercise. Against the current backdrop, strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and OIC is more crucial than ever. Earlier, the Ambassador of Spain offered many, very interesting proposals along those lines, explaining how we might enhance such cooperation, which could help us to better understand the factors that lead to violent radicalization and terrorism, as well as improve our collective action in the fight against the terrorist threat. Naturally, we must — and this is essential — take care so as not to create false conflations. Muslims are by far the principal victims of terrorism.

Our two institutions share common goals. The OIC Programme of Action 2025, adopted at the OOIC Summit in Istanbul in April, and an earlier 10-year action plan called for the strengthening of the role of OIC in matters of conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in its member States, as well as in conflict situations involving Muslim communities.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism provide an excellent framework for cooperation with OIC. As was highlighted by the General Assembly in June, priority must henceforth be given to the implementation of the principal recommendations of the Plan of Action. That responsibility falls, first and foremost, on member States and regional organizations, but the United Nations will be there to assist them in establishing normative frameworks or enhanced operational capacity building activities. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre can also take on some of the burden of that strengthened cooperation.

Finally, while strengthening cooperation between States and between organizations, we must pursue efforts to counter terrorist propaganda with the help of the private sector, civil society organizations and grassroots actors, all of whom contribute to forging trusting civil societies that are diverse and democratic and can generate employment for their young people.

France is greatly attached to the freedom of thought and speech and recognizes the deep extent to which they are intertwined with the freedom of belief and other fundamental freedoms that pave the way for respect for pluralism and the views of others. Those principles must be the driving force behind our teachings, actions and practices. I fully endorse what Mr. Diagne had to say along those lines regarding the pressing need to increase our understanding and attachment to pluralism.

We must fight terrorism and its propaganda of hatred with unrelenting determination and with the necessary and proportionate means and the full arsenal of the law, while fully respecting fundamental freedoms. Those are the same human rights that the terrorists wish to destroy, as they are the very bedrock of our democracies. France will continue to contribute fully to such endeavours.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I thank Senegal for organizing this debate and the briefers for their important statements. Presidential statement S/PRST/2013/16 of October 2013, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) provided long overdue recognition of OIC's growing role in preventing and resolving conflict, as well as of the potential for

enhanced collaboration with the United Nations in those efforts.

Three years on, the need for a strong partnership between the United Nations and OIC has never been greater. The past few years have been traumatic ones for communities across the Islamic world. Many countries with significant Muslim populations are experiencing instability and, in some cases, violent internal conflicts. In many settings that instability has unleashed sectarian tensions that have been exploited by violent extremist groups to stir up hatred and division. Ethnic and religious communities, which in many cases have lived peacefully together for centuries, have been turned against one another. That is tearing at the social fabric of much of the Middle East and North Africa, in particular. It is contributing to population movements that have disturbing implications for the future stability and cohesion of many States. Echoes of those strains and intolerances are also being heard in countries far removed from the centres of Islamic faith.

OIC has an important role to play in countering those messages of hate, in tamping down the embers of conflict and in promoting healing, reconciliation and understanding. OIC's standing in the Islamic world and its deep understanding of the religious and cultural context of Islamic communities make it uniquely placed to promote peace and reconciliation by amplifying the voices of tolerance and moderation. I wish to highlight three areas in which enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC can reinforce their respective abilities to support international peace and security.

First, we welcome OIC's efforts over the past decade to strengthen its capacity to contribute to conflict prevention and resolution. New Zealand has been a consistent advocate for a sharper United Nations focus on conflict prevention and for strengthened cooperation with regional and other partners in support of such efforts. OIC is a natural partner in that regard.

Through its Peace, Security and Mediation Unit, OIC has supported mediation efforts in Afghanistan, Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia, as well as in Thailand and the Philippines in my own region — to name but a few examples. OIC brings to those efforts a unique authority and an ability to reach, work with and mobilize communities and religious leaders in the cause of peace. We encourage OIC to continue and expand that important work.

Nowhere is that need greater than in the efforts to halt the fighting and reconcile and heal divisions between Islamic communities in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the occupied Palestinian territories. The political, military and religious leaders of those countries need to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to bring the suffering of their peoples to an end, including by showing leadership and making the hard political decisions needed to help bring those conflicts to a peaceful resolution. And affected communities will need help in finding ways to live peacefully with each other once more. In close cooperation with the United Nations and other international mediators, OIC has a potentially significant role to play in supporting those efforts. We welcome its participation in the work of the International Syria Support Group and its mediation efforts in Iraq.

Secondly, we acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by many OIC countries in managing the unprecedented global refugee flows that the international community currently faces. Five of the six countries hosting the largest refugee populations are OIC members, collectively hosting more than 6 million people. OIC members are also among the largest humanitarian donors. We also acknowledge the role played by OIC itself in supporting humanitarian work in settings such as Somalia and Darfur, as well as in some of our near neighbours in South-East Asia.

But it is perhaps in preventing and combating violent extremism that we see the greatest potential and need for OIC to contribute in the years ahead. Many communities around the world currently face severe challenges from extremist forces that manifest themselves in many ways, from terrorism and violent extremism, through to aggressively intolerant and exclusionary political and religious movements. Those battles can be fought and won only by way of dialogue and voices within the affected cultures and communities speaking up for peace.

We commend OIC's long-standing commitment to promote understanding among different faiths and communities and to reject all forms of intolerance. All of those in the international community who support moderation and the maintenance of peaceful, inclusive societies must also do their part to support those efforts. That means cooperating with communities so as to prevent the radicalization of our youth and to re-educate and rehabilitate those who fall victim to extremist narratives. It means confronting and defeating

the politics of hatred and exclusion in our communities. And it means working together internationally to amplify the voices of tolerance and moderation.

That is why New Zealand has been a regular partner to OIC and its members in supporting initiatives that promote dialogue and understanding, such as interfaith dialogue and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. And that is why we have been a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The Plan of Action provides an important blueprint and a useful practical resource for other international actors in that space, including OIC. We encourage OIC to deepen its cooperation with the United Nations in that area.

In the light of the many challenges, New Zealand welcomes the OIC 2025 Programme of Action, adopted in April of this year, which sets out a range of actions to strengthen OIC's role in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. The actions agreed at the biennial United Nations-OIC consultations in May provide a useful framework for further strengthening OIC's strategic partnership with the United Nations system in pursuing those goals. New Zealand is confident that the partnership can make a practical difference in restoring peace and security to Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike in the years ahead.

Mr. Akahori (Japan) (*spoke in French*): I also would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Jenča and Mr. Opeloyeru for their briefings, and especially to Mr. Diagne for his informative intervention.

The international community today faces a wide range of challenges, such as terrorism, social unrest, political turmoil and prolonged conflict. The Muslim world in particular faces serious issues, including the spread of violent extremism. It is therefore encouraging that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is dedicated to preventing and countering extremist ideology through its strategic partnership with the United Nations and other efforts.

Japan believes that conflict and violent extremism are rooted in, and exacerbated by, weak governance. In our view, the key factors necessary for stable societies in the Muslim world, a region of remarkable diversity, are inclusiveness and coexistence. Efforts towards national reconciliation, administrative reform and fiscal consolidation are fundamentally important in creating well-governed and inclusive societies.

It is very encouraging that OIC shares that view and is undertaking an inclusive and comprehensive approach in tackling extremism. OIC's efforts towards fostering global dialogue and cooperation by addressing the root causes of terrorism can lead to enhanced social stability and human capital, thereby alleviating the risk of marginalization.

We believe that OIC can play a more prominent role in dealing with the imminent challenges facing the Muslim world today. Actions aimed at meeting urgent humanitarian needs on the ground and at supporting the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons are in line with OIC's stated objectives.

OIC's contributions to humanitarian efforts in Yemen are commendable. It can do more on Syria, both in the humanitarian and in the political domains. Efforts aimed at supporting the Israel-Palestine peace process and improving relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia also offer opportunities for OIC to achieve its long-standing goals, which would, in turn, be of benefit to the entire international community.

The presidential statement of 28 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/16) on cooperation between the United Nations and OIC includes many insights that remain useful and relevant today. We welcome the reference made by the representative of New Zealand to that document.

Japan is confident that OIC will play an active role in overcoming challenges and resolving conflict, thereby enhancing its confidence-building role.

I thank the President of the Council for convening today's meeting, which offers an excellent opportunity for encouraging OIC in its endeavours and for enhancing the strategic partnership between the United Nations and OIC.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Senegal.

I wish to thank today's briefers for their presentations of outstanding quality and clarity. Given the remarks that have been delivered, I will not revisit the framework of mechanisms and modalities of the multidimensional cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Our meeting this morning has established that such cooperation, seen from the point of view of the

fight against extremist ideology, shows the vitality of the relations between the two organizations, which share the same ideals of peace, security and security and development, to name a few.

The convergence of objectives forms the basis of the dynamic framework of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC, marked in particular by the holding of biannual coordination meetings for more than 25 years, the last of which took place in May 2016 in Geneva, leading to the adoption of a framework defining all areas of cooperation, as well as the modalities and mechanisms of implementation.

The vitality of the cooperation between the United Nations and OIC is also evident on the ground, where those great institutions have had a very positive impact working closely on the restoration of peace and security around the world, including in Palestine, Afghanistan, Yemen, in Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also in Africa in Sierra Leone, Mali, the Central African Republic, Somalia, Libya and Darfur, among others. The joint efforts of OIC and the United Nations in all areas of international cooperation, including institutions such as the World Health Organization, not only in the fight against major pandemics, but also in the framework of intercultural dialogue and fighting violent extremism and terrorism, have been most important.

With regard to terrorism and violent extremism, the delegation of Senegal welcomes the effective collaboration between OIC and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, especially in support of capacity-building aimed at preventing the phenomena of extremism and terrorism. The discourse and, unfortunately, the actions of terrorism and extremism continue to deeply destabilize our societies by corrupting some of our young people and women, leading the future of our nations towards a dead end. We must recognize that the current scope and new forms of terrorism make the fight against it even more complex. States, international organizations and civil society must adapt and coordinate strategies and methods for addressing it.

The Muslim world, which includes the countries that are paying the highest price occasioned by terrorism, needs more than ever for OIC to be its voice. Indeed, the unjustifiable acts of terrorism hurt Muslims and lead unfairly to mistrust or even fear of the religion of Islam. Senegal, which solemnly reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, also refutes, in this very Chamber, any attempt to attribute terrorism to any religion, culture or civilization, just as it denounces the desire to manipulate some groups of misled people with a view to turning them Islamophobic.

Meanwhile, we welcome the significant progress made on the ground in the fight against Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Iraq, Syria, the Great Lakes Region of Africa and the Sahel, but we must agree that security alone is no longer a suitable solution in efforts to address the scourge of terrorism. For however many terrorists are physically eliminated, the ideology that underpins their actions remains alive, as long as that ideology is not destroyed. Furthermore, ulemas, scholars, intellectuals and other educators around the world have a significant role to play in deconstructing that ideology, a task that requires dynamic interaction with youth, women and all vulnerable groups, in order to pass on the message of peace and moderation of the sacred book of Muslims the Koran, and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. That preventive strategy seems quite appropriate and fortunately occupies an important place on the agenda of our two organizations, which have made intercultural dialogue an essential component.

The close collaboration between OIC and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is evidence of that relationship. We align ourselves with the strategy that stresses education for youth and women, and the importance of better media in the fight against violent extremism and terrorism. It would indeed be most effective to educate youth and women with the relevant information. Senegal therefore calls for broader participation of young people and women in the design and implementation of any future strategies dealing with the scourge of terrorism, because they, the youth and women, are the main targets and also the main victims of it.

President Macky Sall of Senegal, in his added capacity as Chair of the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, announced, at the thirteenth Islamic Summit held in Istanbul in April, the launch of an international award to recognize the media and the women and men of the media who exemplify tolerance and intercultural harmony by fostering dialogue. I call on all States members of OIC and the United Nations to support that award, which will surely encourage the press to work towards peace and stability.

If extremism has been able to thrive to such a worrying extent, it is because the conditions of its propagation are ripe within the vulnerable factions of our populations that are strongly impacted by poverty and underemployment, thereby leading to a breeding ground for terrorism. It is in all of our interests to strengthen our strategy in the fight against poverty and underemployment. The new OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action 2016-2025 gives an important place to the eradication of extreme poverty in the member countries. That goal is shared by the United Nations and therefore requires our coordinated action for greater effectiveness.

In closing, I would like to thank the contributors, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, who are aware of the magnitude and complexity of the challenges, which is why they have been working for years to strengthen organized and productive cooperation between the two organizations. We urge António Guterres, the Secretary-General-designate of the United Nations, and Dr. Yusuf Al-Othaimeen to persevere in carrying out that duty. We should also build upon what was said by Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne, namely, to use education, enhance pluralism and promote environmental awareness everywhere and at all levels.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Opeloyeru to make observations on the statements delivered.

Mr. Opeloyeru: Mine is just a vote of appreciation.

Let me express, at the close of this very important meeting, and also on behalf of the new OIC Secretary General Yusuf Al-Othaimeen, who was just sworn in a few hours ago by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, our sincere appreciation and gratitude for the briefers' profound contribution and constructive and meaningful insights, suggestions and advisory opinions on the ways and means of widening and reaching strategic cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in all spheres, especially on the topical issue of combatting terrorism and violent extremism internationally.

I also wish to thank United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča and Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne for the input and insight that they have added to this debate. The various suggestions put forward at this meeting will certainly be taken on board as we update the United Nations-OIC joint inventory of activities and the matrix of our joint actions for the current biennium, as well as the actions to be taken by our generous secretariat and the respective intervention programmes being undertaken by our member States. Undoubtedly, we remain committed to consolidating and expanding the excellent and flourishing relations between the United Nations and OIC, in the interest of a peaceful and secure world.

Finally, we have also considered the value of the fruitful exchanges that we have in the Council, and for that purpose we fervently look forward to another briefing session on agreed topical issues of mutual interest on a sustained and regular basis, perhaps biannually. That will align with the priorities of the United Nations-OIC Coordination Meeting, held alternately every two years at the headquarters of both organizations, so that we can also benefit from the traditional and collective wisdom that emanates from this Chamber.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.